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11 March 2016

Mr Stephen Lawrence
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Dear Mr Lawrence

Short inspection of Hornsea School and Language College

Following my visit to the school on 23 February 2016 with Tanya Stuart, HMI, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. The actions to bring about improvement are included in detailed plans linked to ambitious expectations, particularly for better pupil outcomes. Middle leaders describe raised expectations and a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupil progress, which are having a positive impact. You have recognised the need to support some subject areas and made effective links with another good school to drive this support.

You ensure the leadership capacity for school improvement by effective succession planning in an area of the country where recruitment is difficult. The school has developed and supported middle leaders. As a result, middle leadership is improving. Not only have you 'grown your own' leaders, your strong commitment to teacher training means you are able to recruit good-quality teachers.

Governors share your determination and ambition for school improvement. They offer considerable challenge to senior and middle leaders, particularly about the outcomes for pupils. They recognise the need to improve outcomes in some subjects at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are in place. Checks made on adults working in the school are fit for purpose and well organised. Staff receive appropriate and regular child protection training. You ensure that staff and pupils understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and exploitation. There is a strong climate of respect throughout the school. The helpful website reflects well the commitment of the school to the welfare of its pupils.

The vast majority of staff and parents who responded to the questionnaires believe pupils are safe in the school. Pupils confirm this. In particular, you know and look after vulnerable pupils in your care very well. As a result, the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils is well above the national average. The school has highly effective links with a variety of agencies and other professionals who provide support for pupils in need of extra help.

Inspection findings

- Following some disappointing GCSE results in 2015, you have taken determined and decisive action to improve the outcomes for pupils in the GCSE examinations this year and across the school. As a result, the gaps in attainment and progress between boys and girls, and between the disadvantaged and their peers, are closing in all year groups.
- You have sensibly provided opportunities for your heads of department in English and mathematics to work with their counterparts in another good school. Consequently, progress in mathematics has improved and, in the current Year 11, it is above the national average. The impact of actions to improve outcomes in English can be seen in Years 7 to 10, where progress is accelerating. Predictions about the attainment and progress in English in Year 11 are cautious. However, the drive for improvement, supported by more rigorous monitoring of pupils' work, is beginning to impact. A number of pupils taking the English GCSE examination in November have attained good grades, with all of them making at least the expected progress.
- You have worked hard to ensure all posts in the science department are filled by specialist teachers. You recognise the need to improve the outcomes in science, particularly for pupils at Key Stage 4 studying core and additional science. In the current Year 11, pupils studying separate sciences are already making better progress.
- Systems are in place to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, you have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Teachers whose practice needs to improve are provided with appropriate support. Teachers enjoy working together in trios to develop their teaching practice. They have opportunities to attend a wide variety of training. The impact of the extra support and training was seen in some of the classrooms we visited during the inspection.

- Evidence provided by the school shows that the consistency of marking and feedback is beginning to improve in line with the school policy. The procedures for checking and collecting progress information are effective and user-friendly. Consequently, you have more confidence that teachers' assessments are accurate and use them to evaluate the progress of different pupil groups effectively. Progress information is shared with parents and discussed in reviews with pupils. As a result, pupils know their targets and what to do to reach those targets.
- Sixth form learners enjoy the wide range of courses available to them. The head of sixth form has recently instigated more careful monitoring of the programme of study. Consequently, effective systems check learners are working hard and meeting their targets. Intensive extra support is provided for those who need it. It is too soon to see the impact of this work. The school works closely with another school and with the local authority to improve outcomes in A-level subjects which are performing less well. As a result, attainment and progress in some subjects, for example in biology, have improved.
- In the summer term, all Year 12 learners will complete work experience which will add to the wide range of careers advice and guidance already offered. Learners in Key Stages 4 and 5 speak highly of the way the school helps them to prepare for further education, university and employment, including apprenticeships. The proportion of young people entering employment or training on leaving the school is much higher than the national average.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are a strength of the school. The vast majority of staff, parents and pupils believe behaviour is good and it is well managed. Pupils confirm that there is very little bullying of any kind and staff are quick to help with any issues. Attendance has improved over the last three years and is now above the national average. Particularly important is the positive impact you have had on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which is now in line with that of their peers.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits, both locally and abroad, offer rich opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural awareness and their knowledge of life in modern Britain. For example, some pupils have visited Japan and, while there, made presentations to Japanese pupils and taught English. You make sure disadvantaged pupils are able to enjoy these opportunities too.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the good practice which exists is shared, so that teaching leads to consistently good progress in all subjects, particularly at Key Stages 4 and 5.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for East Riding of Yorkshire Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

My colleague and I met with you, other senior leaders, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. I had a telephone conversation with the headteacher of the school supporting some departments in your school. We also held meetings with pupils. We made short visits to lessons with you and other senior leaders, during which we looked at work in pupils' books and talked to them about their learning. We took into account the views of parents, using the Ofsted online survey 'Parent View', and the responses of 66 members of staff to the staff questionnaire. We evaluated a range of documents provided by the school, including information about pupils' progress, safeguarding information and school improvement plans.