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Mrs Janice Hornby
Principal
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Dear Mrs Hornby

Short inspection of Cleethorpes Academy

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Stephen Crossley, 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 May 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Supported by the trust, you have made recent changes to strengthen your strategies to improve the rate of pupils' attendance. There are encouraging signs of improvement in a few pockets during the current school year. However, despite leaders' undoubted hard work, overall, their actions to improve rates of attendance have been limited in their effect. Pupils' attendance continues to be consistently below the national average and has been so for a number of years. The attendance of all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), fell further in the academic year 2017/18. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent improved during 2017/18 but it remains above the national average. Leaders' work is not helped by the numbers of parents or carers taking their children out of school for term-time holidays.

Provisional outcomes information for pupils who took their GCSE examinations or equivalent in 2018 indicates that outcomes declined substantially compared with those achieved by their peers in 2017. Pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects fell from being around the national average in 2017 to below the national average in 2018. This is the case in English, mathematics, the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects (science, history, geography and languages) and the 'open' suite of other GCSE subjects. Disadvantaged pupils' progress fell substantially from above

the national average for other pupils in 2017, to below the national average in 2018. Leaders indicated several factors have combined to contribute to this decline, including the curriculum which was in place when pupils made their choice of key stage 4 courses. Leaders recognised that the curriculum needed to be changed and have recently made revisions so that curriculum breadth and balance has been increased. Some leaders also suggest the decline in 2018 was related to pupils being 'less aspirational' than pupils in other years.

Leaders assert that their policies for pupils' behaviour are effective. During the inspection the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school was calm and orderly. However, the percentage of pupils who are excluded from school for a fixed period has been consistently above the national average for several years. Leaders' information shows a reduction in the use of fixed-term exclusion during the 2017/18 academic year, but it is still above the national figure. The proportion of pupils who have been permanently excluded from school, over the last three years, is well above the national average.

The previous inspection report asked leaders to ensure that action was taken to improve the quality of subject leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress, especially in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. There is evidence that such action has been taken, and that leaders at different levels and across different subjects have a clear understanding of how to monitor pupils' progress and intervene as necessary.

The report also asked leaders to improve the outcomes of the most able pupils. Until 2018, leaders were successful in achieving this, with improved progress in each of 2016 and 2017. However, the progress of the most able pupils fell substantially in 2018.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The necessary checks on adults who work in the school are carried out. Leaders ensure that appropriate training for staff about safeguarding matters is provided on a regular basis. This includes training provided by other agencies, such as the police, on safeguarding priorities in the local area. Links with professionals in external agencies are prompt when required and referrals are followed up.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They have received education about how to stay safe online, about road safety and about their personal safety. Pupils spoken to by inspectors were less clear about any work that leaders have done to educate them about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching is at times inconsistent, including within subjects. At times, teaching does not challenge pupils enough. Occasionally, teachers' use of questions does not enable them to check that pupils have understood the

learning before moving on. Sometimes, the quality of pupils' presentation of their work varies considerably between subjects.

- However, there is some very effective teaching which enables pupils to make gains in their learning from their starting points. Inspectors saw some effective practice in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, humanities, technology and science. The strength of this teaching is typified by teachers' use of challenging tasks and probing questions. It is also typified by teachers' skilful drawing out of pupils' prior learning to help them grasp new knowledge.
- Leaders are working very hard to improve pupils' attendance and there is evidence of some successful action to reduce the absence of targeted groups of pupils. The profile of attendance has been raised, such as through 'Star of the Week' awards. However, leaders know attendance needs to improve further.
- During the inspection, pupils behaved well in both lessons and around school. However, pupils, spoken to by inspectors, said that behaviour was not always as good and that a minority of lessons were regularly disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders have taken recent action to increase the time available to pastoral staff, to better manage some pupils' behaviour. As a result, the rate of fixed-term exclusion of pupils from school is beginning to decline.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further action is taken to improve rates of pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence, including effective action to dissuade parents from taking children out of school during term time
- continued action is taken to further deal with the causes of behaviour which are resulting in the high rates of exclusion of pupils from school, so that rates of exclusion continue to reduce
- the quality of teaching is consistently effective, so that outcomes across GCSE or equivalent qualifications improve, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Shaw
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I met with members of the trust board and the deputy chief executive officer of the trust. I also met with a group of subject leaders. Members of the inspection team met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4 and also spoke informally with them around the school. Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for: safeguarding; teaching and learning; pupil premium; special educational needs; and attendance and behaviour.

We conducted joint visits to lessons with you and other senior leaders. During these visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with pupils about what they were learning and their progress. Inspectors also visited lessons without senior leaders. Inspectors looked in detail at pupils' books and folders, both with and without senior leaders present.

I took into account results from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View (16 responses), including the 16 free-text responses. We looked at a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; school improvement plans; safeguarding records; behaviour and attendance records, including bullying logs; pupil assessment and progress information, and other documents available on the school website.