

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Sharon Hatton  
Principal  
Worlaby Academy  
Low Road  
Worlaby  
Brigg  
North Lincolnshire  
DN20 0NA

Dear Mrs Hatton

### **Short inspection of Worlaby Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 2019, 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 February 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As the principal, you have an unwavering ambition for teaching and learning to be the very best they can be, so that pupils leave school well prepared for the next stage of their education. United leadership, at all levels, and a staff team who feel well supported to do their job effectively, have ensured that pupils make good, and sometimes better, progress over their time in school.

You and your team have created an environment where pupils know that they and their opinions are valued. Pupils are eager to rise to your high expectations. They have a good work ethic, their attendance is very good and they are eager to take on additional responsibilities that are on offer, such as roles as sports ambassadors and reading buddies.

Leadership is a strength of the school. The academy trust, the academy advisory board (AAB) and school leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They work in harmony to secure improvement.

You know your pupils' achievements and backgrounds exceptionally well, which means that you and your team are able to successfully meet their needs. You know which pupils need to make more rapid progress to reach age-related expectations. The support and direction you have given these pupils so far has led to improvements, but these actions need to be further refined for lower-ability pupils in reading so that their progress is accelerated.

At the last inspection, school leaders were directed to improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils, especially boys, make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Particular emphasis was given to the curriculum meeting pupils' needs, subject leaders having a greater role in improving achievement and pupils being well challenged, with no learning time wasted in lessons.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Reception, in phonics and key stage 2 has improved since the last inspection, particularly during the last two years. This is due to leaders' clear direction in well-thought-out strategies for improvement being consistently applied by teachers and teaching assistants. Shared effective strategies across the trust enhance this work. Leaders have rightly identified that there is further work to be done to ensure that children, especially boys, get off to a strong start in the early years in English and that lower-ability pupils are supported in reading with fluency and accuracy.

Pupils have access to a wide range of learning experiences through a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result of their constant evaluations of how learning can be improved, leaders have been trialling a new curriculum with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Pupils gave an excellent account of the benefits of this curriculum in informal discussions with the inspector and in their presentation to the school in assembly. They explained how it deepened their knowledge, made them more independent learners and helped them to commit their learning to memory.

Subject leadership has strengthened. New leaders have embraced the challenges they have been given and quickly got to grips with what needs to improve and how they can implement these changes. Established leadership is strong and has a positive impact on all pupils' progress. For example, in mathematics, pupils of all abilities apply their number skills confidently to reasoning and problem-solving tasks.

Staff's and leaders' promotion of the importance of reading and the pleasure it can bring is reflected in pupils' animated discussions about the different books and authors they enjoy. Older pupils, for example, spoke thoughtfully and maturely about the impact that 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' had on them. Other pupils explained how their reading in science to research Darwin's theory of evolution had supported them in their own theories and discussions about the possible regeneration of species such as dinosaurs and woolly mammoths.

Close attention is given to ensuring that higher-ability pupils have suitable challenge in deepening their learning: more pupils are reaching higher standards as a result. Teaching is strong: pupils have purposeful activities that keep them on task and achieving well.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As in other areas of the school's work, leaders have a joined-up approach to ensuring that all pupils are safe and know how to keep themselves and others safe. They have made sure that thorough systems are in place to check the suitability of staff, volunteers and visitors to the school to work with pupils.

Trust and AAB members check that records and training are up to date. Safeguarding records are fit for purpose. Staff members receive timely training and updates in safeguarding and have a good understanding of how to recognise and report concerns. Concerns, actions taken by leaders, and work with other agencies are recorded effectively.

Pupils understand the systems in place to make sure that it is safe to speak to and work with visitors in school. They feel safe in school and trust the adults to help them with any concerns they may have. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that there was no bullying in their school that they knew of. They gave examples of situations when minor fall-outs have been successfully resolved by staff members. Conversations with many pupils throughout the inspection exemplified their good manners, respect for others and good understanding of celebrating everyone's differences.

### **Inspection findings**

- I was interested to see, with new leaders and staff in post since the last inspection, if the good quality of education has been maintained. All leaders in school, the trust and the advisory board, are fully aware of their role and wholeheartedly committed to continuous improvement. With strong subject knowledge and a clear vision for your school community, you and the assistant principal encourage staff and pupils to aim high. The academy provides excellent support, ensuring that, despite the smaller-than-average size of the school, staff receive good-quality training and development, and pupils have rich experiences. The good quality of education on offer has been maintained and strengthened.
- The AAB members make a valuable contribution to school improvement. They have an excellent understanding of how their role complements that of the trust and school leaders. Their varied backgrounds place them well to check the work of leaders. Their questioning, along with the precise information they receive from leaders, has resulted in them being very knowledgeable about areas such as safeguarding, pupils' achievement and the intent of the curriculum.
- Strong partnerships have been established with the separate, onsite pre-school to ensure that children make a positive start to school. Parents speak very highly of transition arrangements and the staff team's attention to keeping them well informed prior to their children's first day and in celebratory messages sent home since.
- Recent changes in staffing and assessment systems in the early years have now settled. The new teacher, who joined the school in January 2019, has quickly got to know the children well. She has started to establish where children are making good progress and where adults need to make changes to the direction they give and the resources available in learning areas to improve children's progress. Leaders have already identified that children need more opportunities to apply the sounds they have learned in phonics to writing. They know that they need to ensure that areas of learning have resources and activities that will entice children to confidently have a go at sounding out words in their own writing.
- With reading high on the school's improvement agenda, a wealth of activity has

taken place to instil a love of reading and to give pupils the knowledge and skills to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding. Phonics teaching has strengthened over the past two years and consequently almost all pupils now pass the phonics standard at the end of Year 1.

- For pupils with lower starting points in reading, further work is needed to ensure that they quickly catch up and are able to read confidently with fluency and accuracy. Early on, teaching and reading books are not always pitched accurately enough to ensure that children know how to decode new words successfully and to do so with fluency. Leaders and teachers know which pupils have not learned to read with fluency in key stage 1 and 2. They have interventions in place to support pupils in catching up and several opportunities for pupils to practise reading aloud each week. However, for a small proportion of pupils, these interventions do not precisely address the skills that individuals need to improve, so they still struggle to read with fluency.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils get off to a great start in the early years and make excellent progress over their time in school by:
  - continuing to work closely with the pre-school to make sure that children’s starting points are clear, and that their progress is checked carefully and used to direct the next steps in their learning across the curriculum
  - ensuring that areas of learning in the early years engage boys in developing their basic skills and all children in trying out their writing skills independently
  - refining the extra support that lower-ability pupils have in phonics and reading in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, so that they become more fluent and accurate readers.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, we spent time together in lessons observing learning and looking at the quality of pupils’ work. We discussed your evaluation of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement. We looked at the success of the actions you and your team have taken. I held discussions with four members of the AAB, including the chair, and had a separate meeting with the regional director of

education for Delta Academy Trust. I met with the new lead teacher for reading, the early years team and school administrative staff. I spoke to pupils about their learning and the school, and listened to pupils read. I attended the curriculum assembly led by Year 6 pupils. I spoke to parents before school started and took into account the eight responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I considered the eight responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. I reviewed a number of school documents, including the written evaluation of the school's work, school records and information about reading, attendance information and a range of policies and safeguarding information.