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18 December 2017

Mrs Kerry Dalton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dalton

Short inspection of Rocliffe Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2017, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a culture of high expectations that is shared by all staff and members of the governing body. You have instilled a love of learning across the school through teaching that is often enriched by practical engagement with the real world. You are building leadership capacity by giving new leaders responsibilities for monitoring standards and leading improvements in key areas. As a result, you have developed a shared focus on improvement and higher standards. Through your central role in the North Star Teaching Alliance, and through partnerships such as the Maths Hub, you have actively promoted professional development activities and networking meetings to strengthen expertise and moderate standards. As a result of strong leadership, robust systems and effective teaching, pupils achieve high standards and make good, and improving, progress.

School leaders have established an ethos of trust and consideration that informs all aspects of the school's work. Parents and pupils value the climate of mutual respect that characterises relationships across the school. The exceptional curriculum promotes curiosity, independence and imagination, enabling pupils to create meaningful connections between their learning and its application in real-world contexts. Residential trips at home and abroad, outdoor pursuits, diverse sporting experiences and inter-generational projects with a local nursing home are a small

selection of the diverse experiences that stimulate interest and enable pupils to develop wider personal and social skills.

Leaders engender a culture of mutual respect where pupils look after one another. Parents and pupils value the buddy system, where older pupils provide support for younger pupils in the school. Pupils value their education and this is reflected in the exceptionally high rates of attendance that you have sustained. Pupils are given a voice, such as their recent request to run a school-based talent show to raise money for the nurture centre. Pupils value the opportunities you have provided to develop their independence and self-confidence through outdoor pursuits, camping experiences and wider responsibilities at school.

You have shown the ability to successfully address areas for improvement. After a dip in outcomes in mathematics in 2016, you used your own expertise to introduce a range of strategies to strengthen the curriculum and the quality of teaching in mathematics. Pupils now have regular opportunities to consolidate their skills through practical experience and apply their reasoning. This contributed to substantial improvements in attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 and higher standards of progress in mathematics across the school.

You and your team maintain a focus on high standards through regular monitoring. All teachers review pupils' progress on a half-termly basis and swiftly put well-tailored support plans in place to address emerging underachievement. Leaders and teachers work with external partners from neighbouring schools and the local authority to check standards and the quality of pupils' work. By balancing professional development with close monitoring, you are establishing strong processes that have supported high levels of attainment and improving progress from pupils.

Governors share your high expectations and are committed to the success of the school. They receive regular information on pupils' progress and question leaders on aspects of progress. Governors have specific areas of responsibility linked to their interests and experience. For example, a governor with expertise in social care has recently taken responsibility for safeguarding. Governors have the skills and tenacity to hold leaders to account. They check the impact of additional funding, such as use of the physical education and sport premium funding, which has supported high levels of participation in a diverse range of sporting competitions.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and staff are mindful of pupils' welfare. Rigorous checks are made on the suitability of adults working at the school. The headteacher ensures that staff receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues. Any concerns over pupils' welfare are pursued thoroughly and recorded assiduously. Pupils feel safe and the vast majority of their parents agree. Pupils were able to discuss the actions they could take to remain safe, for example the actions needed to stay safe online and to avoid the threats posed by strangers.

Inspection findings

- Your dedication to continuing improvement across phases has led to a climate where teaching is consistently good. You have created successful partnerships with your teaching alliance and the local authority to develop and share expertise, monitor standards and accelerate improvement.
- Teachers and governors share your high expectations and vision to engender a love of learning through engaging teaching and an absorbing curriculum. Your team has responded to the new national curriculum with imagination and purpose, creating purposeful links between subjects and using a constant programme of trips and visitors to establish ongoing connections between the classroom and the wider world.
- Pupils are very well behaved and demonstrate high levels of courtesy towards one another and adults. Pupils value opportunities to develop their resilience and independence on residential trips and through organising fund-raising activities. Pupils are positive learners who work well with one another and focus attentively when required. Rates of attendance are very high as pupils value their learning and find the school a welcoming and stimulating place in which to learn.
- Leaders have addressed many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is typically good and new initiatives in mathematics are increasing opportunities for pupils to make stronger progress.
- Leaders have introduced a range of strategies to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics. In Year 6, pupils were seen applying their problem-solving skills to their study of Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in a cross-curricular project. Across year groups, work in books showed that pupils have regular opportunities to consolidate their understanding of number, with regular opportunities to demonstrate their mathematical reasoning. This contributed to much stronger outcomes in 2017.
- Teachers use effective strategies to develop pupils' reading skills in early years and at key stages 1 and 2. Outcomes in the phonics screening check are typically well above those achieved nationally, with the vast majority of pupils achieving the required standard. Pupils typically make good progress in reading, although not as strongly as in mathematics. New initiatives, such as the 'Roecliffe 100 Reads' list of recommended texts and the deeper study of whole texts, are increasing pupils' access to more challenging texts in order to further develop their stamina and skills of inference and deduction.
- Teaching enables pupils to develop their writing as they progress through the school and gain experience of a range of genres. Meaningful contexts, such as a writing project with residents of a local nursing home, frequently give pupils' writing an authentic sense of audience and purpose. On occasions, pupils' progress in writing is not as strong because spelling errors are not routinely addressed and paragraphing can be variable. The strengths pupils demonstrate in grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments are not always transferred to their extended writing. New initiatives are in place to further accelerate pupils' progress, but they are not yet as consistently implemented as in mathematics.

- As a result of imaginative planning, effective teaching and the creative use of resources, children in early years make good progress and achieve levels of development well above those seen nationally. Teachers track children's progress and development carefully and work closely with parents to plan next steps in learning.
- Leaders provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work with external partners to diagnose pupils' needs and work closely with parents and pupils to check on the impact of support on a regular basis. This is supporting pupils in making good progress.
- Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to pursue scientific explorations in depth. Pupils acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding and have regular opportunities to practise and implement skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils acquire languages from an early age and are able to apply their learning on residential experiences to France.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing is further accelerated through the consistent implementation of new initiatives to strengthen the quality of writing
- the strong and improving progress in mathematics is matched in reading through the continued implementation of new strategies to add further challenge and deepen skills of inference and deduction.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Anglican Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

As part of the inspection, I explored the impact of leadership and management and teaching and learning upon pupils' progress across the school. I also explored provision and outcomes in early years and aspects of phonics teaching. I also looked at the wider curriculum across the school and aspects of personal development and welfare, including attendance.

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and middle leaders. I also spoke to three members of the governing body, including the chair. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils less formally in lessons. I also

talked to the school improvement partner from the local authority. I undertook learning walks with you. I also looked at pupils' work in books and folders. I examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, local authority monitoring reports, behaviour and attendance information, and pupil tracking. I examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record. I took into account 18 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, 10 free-text responses, and 30 responses to the pupil questionnaire.