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Ms Amanda Fell  
Headteacher  
Ryvers School  
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Langley  
Slough  
Berkshire  
SL3 7TS

Dear Ms Fell

### **Short inspection of Ryvers School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2016 with Jenny Boyd, Ofsted Inspector, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

A combination of strong teamwork, deeply held common values and a serious focus on raising standards characterises your work and the leadership of your senior team.

When you were appointed in April 2015, you quickly identified that a period of instability in leadership had led to a relative decline in standards. You took immediate steps to review the work of the school. Weaker performance in teaching was tackled. You introduced higher expectations of pupils' behaviour, strengthened leadership and revised the curriculum to prepare pupils more effectively for their next steps. For some of these initiatives, it is still early days, but the school is now on a firmly stable footing and pupils' progress is accelerating. Staff and governors agree that the school is in a better position than it was two years ago.

You provide clear direction for the school. You are not afraid to make changes and have developed a team of leaders and staff who are equally dedicated and effective in their roles. You all possess an accurate and realistic evaluation of the school. You keep in mind your overall ambitions, but also work in a hands-on way with pupils and classes when required. Subject and phase leaders relish the opportunity to be

more accountable for their different areas. They fully respect each other's expertise and learn from each other. In this way, pupils progress through the school smoothly and build on their prior learning.

Teachers, learning support assistants and non-teaching staff also appreciate the clear direction you give. They share your unequivocal focus on what is best for pupils and children. Staff take their responsibilities seriously and want to develop their skills and benefit from further training and professional development.

Teaching is good and improving. When the predecessor school was inspected in 2012, pupils' writing was identified as an area for improvement. Focused work on monitoring and improving teachers' planning and their use of assessment led to better rates of progress in writing, although this is still a key focus for staff and leaders.

End-of-key-stage results in mathematics were disappointing in 2015 and you have taken effective steps to improve pupils' progress by:

- paying more careful attention to appropriate grouping of pupils
- ensuring that teaching provides enough challenge for all abilities
- giving children and pupils opportunities to build up their number skills and confidence right from their entry to the school.

The work you have done is beginning to pay off and pupils are now achieving well in mathematics throughout the school.

You and your senior team have reviewed the range of subjects and topics studied in the school. You are tailoring the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and interests and also to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. The school's stated values match with British values and take account of your diverse community. Principles of cooperation and respect permeate the whole school and underpin the respectful, happy and productive atmosphere.

Following your review of the school, you recognised that expectations of behaviour needed to be raised and that pupils should earn more rewards for their good conduct. A recently introduced 'Good to be Green' scheme is proving to have an immediate impact on standards and attitudes to learning. Staff and most parents welcome the system and its consistency.

In short, the school is a purposeful and cooperative community where pupils come first. You have built on the many existing strengths of the school at the same time as raising expectations and pushing for more ambitious outcomes. Positive values of harmony and teamwork are deep-rooted and help to ensure that staff and pupils take change and new developments in their stride.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

When I checked the school's records of vetting checks on staff working in the school, I found that all were carried out thoroughly and recorded clearly. You and your leadership team have ensured that staff training in child protection and safeguarding is up to date and takes into account the recent guidance from the Secretary of State. Staff were able to explain clearly exactly what their duties are regarding pupils' safety and protection. They know how to report concerns and do so promptly.

Staff demonstrate their thorough understanding of the need to protect pupils from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Concerns are passed to the appropriate agencies in an appropriate and timely manner.

Records of safeguarding concerns are filed neatly and securely. They provide an accurate and comprehensive narrative of all the work done to support pupils and families who may find themselves vulnerable or at risk of harm. The school works closely with the Prevent duty and agencies in the local authority, including healthcare professionals and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They behave well and their attendance rates are high. Pupils respect the different cultures in their community. They take notice of the guidance given by their teachers, and as a result are safe from harm. Pupils have a good awareness of safety when using the internet or social media. School leaders and staff make sure that access to the school site is carefully checked and that boundaries are secure.

## **Inspection findings**

- Your ambition and determination to raise standards in the school came across strongly throughout the inspection and are echoed by your senior team and all the staff we spoke to. Staff are behind all the changes and most parents have welcomed the new ways of working in the school.
- The inspection team noted that a minority of parents have been unsettled by changes in leadership and the new behaviour management system. However, you and your team of leaders and governors are rightly undaunted because you have convincing evidence to demonstrate that changes are having a positive impact on standards. The pupils we spoke to certainly were in favour of the current arrangements in the school and were happy and achieving well.

- Governors fully support the direction of the school. They also make sure that they challenge and ask questions, particularly related to last year's end-of-key-stage results, which were disappointing. You have made no excuses for weaker than typical performance and you and your team have set about ensuring that current progress accelerates and that pupils will do better this year. Evidence seen during the inspection shows that your strategy is working. When we examined pupils' books, we saw examples of pupils' lively and accurate writing in all subject areas. We compared work completed in September with more recent examples, and the progress was self-evident. A similar picture was seen in mathematics, showing pupils' growing confidence and mastery.
- Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are a top priority and are attended by you or members of your senior team. Parents are involved in the process through an improved reporting system and staff are held to account for how well their pupils are doing. In this way, the whole school is focused on achieving outstanding outcomes for all.
- In particular, you and your leadership team are rightly focusing on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and also those who have special educational needs or disability. Pupil premium funding is spent on a range of additional support for eligible pupils and children, leading to enhanced self-esteem, increased attendance rates and improved achievement. You are determined to ensure that disadvantaged pupils will not only make good progress from their starting points, but will also catch up with others in the school and match or exceed their attainment.
- On our visits to lessons during the inspection, we observed pupils concentrating well and working hard. Across the whole school, children and pupils are respectful to each other and their teachers. They are eager to learn and are happy to tackle challenging work and persist in working out answers. Pupils are communicative and want to contribute and participate. Learning support assistants support pupils well, without doing the work for them. Pupils' books in all subjects demonstrate high expectations of presentation and commitment.
- When we met pupils around the school, at lunchtime, in lessons and in our formal conversations with them, they were unfailingly polite and friendly. They are rightly proud of their school and wanted to talk about how they were doing and the different opportunities they have. They enjoy participating in competitions, sports fixtures and cultural events.
- A very small number of parents expressed concerns about how bullying was managed by the school. However, evidence gathered during the inspection demonstrated the school's thorough approach to tackling and resolving incidents reported by parents or pupils. When we spoke to pupils, they had no concerns about bullying or name-calling.
- The classroom accommodation on the school site has grown over the last few years and recently built blocks are attractive and well maintained. Different phases and year groups are located together, which contributes to a sense of community and common purpose.

- Pupils are well mannered in the dining hall and enjoy school lunches and socialising. They make the most of the inviting open space around the school site. The playgrounds are well supervised, friendly and inviting, with access to games equipment to support healthy exercise and competition.
- Pupils in the resourced unit, Octopus, make good progress socially and academically. They have plenty of opportunities to work with their peers in the school community. The expertise of well-qualified staff extends beyond the resourced provision and assures strong levels of support for all pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education. Many children start school with limited knowledge of English. Well-planned activities, stimulating resources and accomplished leadership and staff ensure that children quickly gain confidence and learn to speak English with a level of fluency appropriate for their age.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good or better in all classes and year groups
- the rationale for improvements to the school is explained and promoted clearly to all parents, including those who are harder to reach.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Slough Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- We met with you, members of your senior leadership team, five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a group of staff.
- Accompanied by senior leaders, we visited classes in every year group to observe teaching and learning. We also made a visit to assembly.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. An inspector also met formally with a selected group of pupils.
- In addition to looking at pupils' work in lessons, we scrutinised a representative sample of pupils' books to evaluate rates of progress.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including information about pupils' current progress, minutes from governors' meetings and the school's monitoring of teaching and learning.

- The school's safeguarding procedures were scrutinised, including policies, records of referrals made to children's services and checks on staff employed in the school.
- An inspector spoke to a small number of parents at the school gate. We took into account the 51 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including 32 written comments sent to the inspection team. The school's own survey of parents and pupils was also taken into consideration.
- We reviewed the 51 responses to the online staff survey.