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Mr James Rourke  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Rourke

### **Short inspection of Rufforth Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 2016, 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 January 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been significant staffing changes at the school and pupil numbers have risen by a third. However, leaders have maintained the special 'family' feel that pervades the whole school community.

Since your appointment in January 2015, you have brought a renewed energy, rigour and vision to the school. You are committed to providing the best education for your families and they appreciate the work you do. Staff are enthusiastic and energised by the way in which you support and help them to improve and develop their practice. Your pupils describe you as 'full of fun and joyful', and governors articulate the impact you are having. The school is improving quickly because you have high expectations and lead by example.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics continue to improve. You have quickly tackled the two-year decline in progress across key stage 2, seen in 2013 and 2014. The progress made by pupils in mathematics and writing has risen considerably, and indications show that in the 2016 tests, pupils made improved progress in reading.

At the last inspection, you were asked to extend pupils' learning and accelerate their progress by improving marking and feedback. You now have an effective marking and feedback system which is helping pupils understand how to improve their work.

Writing books show evidence of good progress and teachers are applying the policy consistently. As a result, progress in writing has improved significantly.

You were also asked to use monitoring information to help teachers continue to improve. Teachers can give examples of how their performance has improved through the more rigorous systems you have introduced. Along with performance management, each teacher's personal development plan sets out their strengths and any areas for development. You use this information to provide professional development opportunities, and teachers appreciate the help this provides in widening their experience and improving their practice. You also utilise teachers' strengths both within school and by providing support to other schools. Teachers welcome the increased personal development and there is a shared sense of enthusiasm and passion. Consequently, morale and standards are high.

A recent extension to the early years classroom has further improved the quality of provision. Alongside this, you have provided opportunities for the early years teacher to visit outstanding practitioners when considering how to set up the new areas. Children are happy and settled in their new school, which is evidence of the strong transition procedures that are in place.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team regularly checks that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and fit for purpose. Records are kept securely, and are detailed and of high quality. All safeguarding information is kept in one place, which is easy to monitor and check. All staff have completed safeguarding training and are kept updated with any recent changes. Pupils say that they feel safe and their parents strongly agree.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school through rigorous self-evaluation. All leaders and teachers contribute to writing the school development plan, which is drawn up through analysing the previous plan, pupils' outcomes and information from monitoring. This results in shared ownership, where everyone knows and understands the key priorities of the school and what they need to do to improve. Consequently, improvements are systematic and the improvement plan provides a useful document by which governors can hold you to account.
- Parents are particularly positive about the school. They value the warm relationships and its standing within the local community. They feel well informed because you frequently send information via social media. You regularly celebrate the many successes of your pupils through vibrant newsletters which epitomise your school motto, 'excellence in a family atmosphere.' Over two thirds of your parents responded to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. All parents would recommend the school. Free-text comments were extremely positive, and state how the family ethos is prevalent, with one stating, 'we hit the jackpot with Rufforth!'

- Pupils continue to demonstrate extremely high standards of behaviour. They say that this is a friendly school where everyone goes out of their way to be your friend. They are extremely polite, play well together and say that it is a very rare occasion when anyone does the wrong thing. Behaviour logs back this up, with only a few minor incidents recorded, which have been quickly and easily resolved. The new behaviour policy focuses on praising and recognising the positive behaviours shown by all pupils.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to offer solutions to problems or to discuss their work with each other. Teachers make use of this strength through the use of paired and group activities to extend and consolidate learning. Pupils work well together, take turns and share their ideas: they listen to each other and give thoughtful responses. They remain on task because they understand what they are being asked to do and find their work interesting.
- Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond accordingly. However, on some occasions, the level of challenge is not matched well enough to the most able, and these pupils spend too long completing tasks they can already do before moving on to the challenge tasks. As a result, some of the most able pupils are not making enough rapid progress throughout key stage 2. You have identified this as an area to improve and are addressing it through your school development plan and through staff training. As a result of recent changes, tracking information now specifically includes the most able pupils as a separate group, which is helping leaders to identify where extra challenge and support are being effective.
- The teaching of early reading skills is a strength of the school. Younger pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of how to sound out blends when reading. Books are matched to ability and give the right amount of challenge to both most- and least-able readers. Progress in reading is particularly strong across key stage 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils form a tiny minority of the school population. Effective tracking by the senior teacher shows that all pupils are making good progress in English, but less so in mathematics. Regular progress reviews enable leaders to put in support where it is needed, and leaders are measuring the impact routinely.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the school. Detailed 'pupil passports' give an overview of specific needs and indicate how these are being met. As a result, this small group of pupils are making good or better progress. Parents of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly happy with the emotional and educational support their children receive.
- Writing work shows good progress across the school. Teachers are focusing on improving grammar, spelling and punctuation because attainment is not as high as it could be in this area. During one well-planned activity in key stage 2, pupils constructed sentences and identified the main and subordinate clause. Younger pupils in key stage 1 were asked to identify noun phrases and use them in their writing. Pupils showed good understanding. Writing work is regularly assessed to ensure that pupils are applying their knowledge to their independent work.
- The additional sports funding is used well. Pupils take part in a range of sports

activities both during and after school time. Leaders are increasing opportunities for competitions and tournaments. As a result, more pupils take part in sporting events.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders continue to drive forward improvements identified on the school development plan so that the most able pupils make sustained and rapid progress across all areas of the curriculum
- teachers fully understand how to support pupils' learning at greater depth
- the focus on improving the use of grammar, punctuation and spelling continues, so that outcomes are in line with those of other subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the senior teacher and all your class teachers. I held meetings with the governing body and a group of pupils. We visited every classroom to observe the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, talked to pupils and looked at samples of their work. I scrutinised your self-evaluation and school development plan. I evaluated a wide range of documentation which you provided for me. I considered the 61 parent responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). I also considered seven responses to the online staff questionnaire and 46 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.

### **Key areas looked at during the inspection**

- How well is the school ensuring that pupils continue to make good progress especially the most able?
- How well is the teaching of writing, reading and mathematics enabling pupils to make good progress in these three subjects?
- How effectively is additional funding used to develop sport in the school?
- What impact has the new building had on improving the early years?