

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 January 2017

Mrs Ann Cook
Headteacher
The Ropsley Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Ropsley
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG33 4BT

Dear Mrs Cook

Short inspection of The Ropsley Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 December 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are extremely proud to be the headteacher of this school and particularly proud of the school's history and the role the school plays within the community. Many parents were keen to tell the inspector the difference that the school had made to their child. One commented that: 'My child is flourishing at this school. He is confident, happy, well supported and cared for. I could not ask for anything more.' A further parent commented that they could not praise the commitment and skills of the staff enough.

Leaders' determination to ensure that all pupils are involved in sporting activity is a special feature of the school. Work with a sporting charity has further enabled pupils to take part in team and individual sporting opportunities at local, regional and national level. Leaders believe that through these many activities all pupils learn how to be part of a team, how to work together, how to win and how to lose and importantly, how to deal equably with such experiences. There is no doubt that sport enriches the education of the pupils in this school.

Pupils whose parents work within the military attend this school. Leaders have embraced this. A specialist support worker is employed to smooth these pupils' transition to the school. Expert support is on hand while they attend school. The inspector spoke with one parent who said that this high-quality support had made a great deal of difference to his child who was making progress, had made

friends and was happy.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Since this inspection, there has been much change nationally in the ways in which pupils' academic progress is assessed. You have kept abreast of these changes. You regularly review and check that information about pupils' progress is accurate, is understood by teachers and is then used successfully to plan pupils' learning and to inform any specialist support that may be needed. There have been challenges. You say that in 2016 teachers were overly cautious in the assessment of key stage 2 writing. To address this you have brokered specialist advisory support, which you say has helped to further improve teachers' confidence and the accuracy of their judgements. The partnership work to check assessments with teachers in other local schools has also been helpful. In the sample of writing seen by inspectors, the teachers' assessment of pupils' writing was accurate.

Also, in response to the findings of the previous inspection, leaders and teaching staff have worked successfully to improve the feedback pupils receive in order to improve the quality of their work. In workbooks, inspectors saw that pupils were receiving helpful advice from their teachers across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils said they particularly appreciated the efforts taken by their teachers to help them improve. They particularly valued their learning journals, within which they could record their personal achievements and successes.

You are aware that there are areas to develop; for example, sometimes teachers need to demand from pupils higher-quality presentation and care in mathematics.

In 2016, pupils' achievement at key stage 1 in reading was disappointing. You are tackling this issue. The most recent information about pupils' progress in reading indicates a significant improvement. A high proportion of pupils are on track to meet the expected standards. Pupils read with confidence and enjoyment. They use their phonic skills well to confidently read unfamiliar or difficult words. They enjoy reading outside school. However, at times the expectations of the small number of lower-ability pupils are not high enough. These pupils are capable of more, particularly as many achieved the national expectations in phonics.

There are a small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school. The planning in place to address these pupils' needs is good. Specialist support is in place and is often successful. Governors check that the pupil premium funding is spent appropriately and is helping eligible pupils. You are aware of the need to accelerate the progress of lower-ability disadvantaged pupils.

Governors provide effective support to the school. There is a new chair of the governing body. Governors have the appropriate skills in order to conduct their roles successfully. Committee structures are in place and are helpful. The chair of the governing body is committed to ensure that this small school does not

become an isolated rural school. To this end, governors are heavily involved in strategic planning to develop partnerships with other schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have created a school ethos of care and consideration. Parents say they believe this to be an important feature of the school. Pupils report that they feel extremely safe in school and, quite literally, gave the school thumbs up! They say teachers know them well and are extremely caring. All those pupils spoken with say they have many people to go to if they have worries or need any help.

Pupils learn about ways in which to keep themselves safe, including how to keep safe when using social media. They eloquently explain how to minimise the possible risks when using a computer or mobile telephone. Pupils are aware of the school rules in place to keep them safe. They know who the designated safeguarding lead is and what to do if they need help.

Pupils' attendance is good and is improving. Parents clearly value the school and want their child to attend. Leaders are aware of the pupils who fail to attend the school regularly enough and have effective systems in place to address this issue. They are aware of the need to pay close attention to this issue.

Leaders manage the recruitment of staff efficiently. Records relating to this are well kept. An up-to-date safeguarding policy is in place. You have adopted the local authority model. We discussed the suggested staff training programme within the policy and agreed this required further consideration in order to better meet the needs of the school. You are aware of the urgent need to ensure that all staff receive up-to-date training relating to radicalisation.

You recognise that, moving forward, a more strategic and sharper approach is needed to manage some of the documentation relating to pupils' safeguarding and welfare.

Inspection findings

- Assessment processes have improved since the previous inspection. Leaders regularly review and adapt the whole-school assessment system to make sure it provides high-quality information about the progress pupils make.
- Teachers receive training to make sure their judgements are accurate. They check their assessments with partners in other local schools. This means that leaders, teachers, pupils and parents have an accurate view of pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teachers' feedback is consistent across a range of subjects. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils receive the same high-quality feedback in their topic books and in art sketch pads, as they do in English and mathematics.
- In some instances, pupils' work lacks care, particularly in mathematics. This is not always addressed well enough by the teacher.
- Evidence in workbooks indicates that pupils are gaining many opportunities to

write in meaningful ways at key stage 2. Teachers encourage pupils to write at greater length and with wider scope. Pupils apply their English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills well in their writing.

- Pupils use first-hand and real-life experiences as a stimulus for their writing. Pupils told the inspector they enjoyed developing the dialogue for a school drama production which they then performed. They particularly enjoyed using a range of multi-media to explore different ways to communicate.
- Pupils' progress within key stage 1 is improving, particularly in reading. Pupils read with confidence and enthusiasm. They read unfamiliar words and understand meaning. Pupils told the inspector they enjoy reading both in school and at home.
- Teachers' expectations of some lower-ability pupils, including lower-ability disadvantaged pupils, are sometimes not high enough. Some of these pupils are capable of achieving more than they do.
- The support for children whose parents are in the military is highly effective. These pupils settle well and make good progress.
- There are a small number of disadvantaged pupils within the school. The planning in place to address the academic barriers for these pupils is good. Further attention is now required to ensure that the progress of this group of pupils is accelerated.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the records linked to pupils' safety and welfare are precise and are well kept
- staff safeguarding and welfare training is reviewed and staff training needs addressed
- the progress of lower-ability pupils, including lower-ability disadvantaged pupils, is accelerated and the expectations of what these pupils can achieve is increased
- teachers demand work from all pupils that is of high quality and shows care, especially in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

My inspection focused upon a number of lines of enquiry. These were:

- whether the areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, had been dealt with effectively
- what are leaders doing to address the issues of writing at key stage 2
- what are leaders doing to address the issues of reading at key stage 1
- what are leaders doing to ensure that pupil premium funding is effectively spent to benefit eligible pupils
- whether the safeguarding procedures are effective.

During the inspection, I met with you, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I met with a senior leader and a representative from a sporting charity that works with the school. I reviewed staff safer-recruitment procedures. I met with all staff during the morning briefing meeting. I spoke with eight parents and considered the views of a further 41 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. In addition, I considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, pupils' performance and pupils' attendance information. I spoke formally with a group of pupils and heard pupils read.

The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.