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Mrs Sue Davis-McCoy
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Davis-McCoy

Short inspection of Rossmore School

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your assured leadership, the school has effectively addressed most of the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection report. The school's pupil premium funding is improving the rates of progress and attendance for disadvantaged pupils. This is because leaders, including governors, carefully consider how to use the funding and check frequently the difference this is making to pupils' outcomes. Improvements to the promotion of different cultures and faiths are well documented on the school's website. Display boards vibrantly celebrate pupils' work and show the many opportunities they have to find out about a diverse society. This contributes to the bright and friendly environment that pupils talk about enthusiastically, alongside pupils' strong preparation for life in modern Britain. Your effective management of the considerable turnaround in staffing, alongside these improvements, is setting a culture of ambition within this friendly and caring school.

You have identified that further work is needed to challenge the most able pupils, particularly since the introduction of the new national curriculum. Your own progress information and the work in pupils' books show that there is more to do to help this group attain beyond the expectations for their age.

Parents are positive about the school. They value the quality of teaching and care that children and pupils receive. One parent who responded to Ofsted's online

survey, Parent View, summed this up by stating: 'It is lovely to see a school taking pride in shaping children for their entire future.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose: records are detailed and of high quality. Staff receive regular updates and checks on newly appointed staff are well managed. There is a culture of vigilance in which staff are alert to potential risk and take effective action to keep pupils safe. This is valued by pupils, who feel well cared for because of the strong relationships between pupils and staff within the school.

Inspection findings

- One of the key areas of the inspection was to look at how the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils are challenged in their mathematics work. From the work pupils have completed in their books it is clear that they make good progress. You are aware that more can be done to enable pupils to achieve the highest standards. This is echoed in the pupil survey, where almost one third of the pupils who responded did not think that they were consistently challenged by their work.
- When working together, pupils display good reasoning skills. The most successful teaching builds on pupils' prior learning so that their misconceptions are addressed. The most able pupils, however, complete work that is similar to others in their class and time in lessons is not always used productively. The most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils' work books confirm this to be typical over time.
- The introduction of a new assessment system is starting to assist staff in planning more ambitious lessons for the most able pupils but this is in its infancy and has not yet had enough of an effect on pupils' progress or standards.
- Monitoring records show your views of teaching and learning are accurate. Consequently, staff training is appropriate and matched well to individual needs. This is ensuring that new staff are brought into the fold quickly.
- Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is correct. However, leaders do not pull apart the reasons why the school has been successful in its actions or clearly identify how it can improve in the future. As such, school development plans lack the clear, measurable outcomes required for governors to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the actions you are taking to improve the school.
- Leaders track pupils' learning carefully and are aware of how they measure up to the standards expected for their age. Governors have a good grasp of this information. However, too little attention is given in this analysis to the proportions of most-able pupils who are exceeding these expectations.
- Although governors have high aspirations for the school, the lack of detail in the improvement plans means that the high expectations for the achievement of the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils are not set out precisely enough.

- Strategies for tackling pupils' absence have been successful in improving the attendance of targeted pupil groups. The school has worked effectively with parents to ensure that almost all pupils' attendance is better than in the previous year, with half of the targeted pupils achieving the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement plans include more precise targets against which governors can evaluate the success of the actions undertaken to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
- they consider more carefully the reasons why their actions have been successful or unsuccessful so that they can plan more effectively for the future
- teachers have higher expectations of what the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils can achieve within lessons, especially in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Meetings were held with staff, governors, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- I looked through a range of pupils' mathematics work.
- I observed teaching in classes with you.
- Safeguarding documentation, behaviour and bullying records as well as attendance rates were evaluated as part of the inspection.
- I heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- I spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally at playtime and in lessons.
- I took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, governors' meeting minutes, monitoring records, the school's development plans and the performance information for pupils currently in the school.