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14 July 2017

Mr Mark Elliott  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Elliott

### **Short inspection of Roughlee Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 April 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has experienced instability in its leadership since it was last inspected. This limited the pace of improvement. However, since your appointment in March 2016, the school has benefited from your clear vision and relentless drive to accelerate the improvement journey. Pupils, parents, governors and staff recognise the positive impact that you have had in a short space of time. You have appointed new teachers and led them effectively into taking a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Staff are fully supportive of the changes that have been implemented and, as a result, pupils now make better progress, especially in the early years.

Governors know their school well and consequently have a strong grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your school improvement plan accurately identifies aspects of teaching and learning that can be improved. Teachers are actively engaged in implementing the actions identified in the plan, and these improvements are raising pupils' achievement across the school.

Roughlee CofE provides a warm, caring and welcoming environment in which pupils flourish and develop in confidence. Adults know pupils extremely well, and make learning interesting and exciting so that they make good progress. The atmosphere at school is calm and purposeful. Pupils enjoy learning, behave well and support each other admirably. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

The school is at the heart of the community, and is highly valued and supported by most parents. The majority of parents who spoke to me and responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive about your leadership. They told me that the school had rapidly improved. Parents say that they can approach staff, who are always there to help. They feel that they are well informed about their child's progress. One comment from a parent summed up the majority of their views: 'The school radiates a warm, secure, safe and positive setting for my children. I feel that the staff and management team are very approachable, which really does make a difference. There is a great "family" feel to the school, and I feel that all staff know my children well.'

Since taking up your position, you have focused on tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers now provide pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in real-life situations across the curriculum.

Another area to improve was matching pupils' work to their needs, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils are now given work that is increasingly challenging and is helping them to achieve their potential. This was confirmed by the work that I saw in pupils' books. As a result, tasks link to pupils' ability and enable them to make good progress.

We discussed the strengths of the school and areas where improvements could be made. You have identified the need to strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the foundation subjects. This would ensure that the leadership of all subjects is strong and pupils' progress is used to plan appropriate activities. Another area of improvement was to review your website to ensure that it is compliant, especially in relation to the funding for disadvantaged pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As the school's designated safeguarding leader, you carry out the role very effectively. You, the governors and staff ensure that all pupils are safe, feel secure and flourish. You work effectively with external agencies to support children and families. Staff and governors have completed 'Prevent' duty training and receive regular training on safeguarding matters. As a result, all staff, including governors, have a good awareness of the indicators of abuse and neglect, and follow the appropriate procedures when they have a concern. Those who are responsible for recruitment have completed training at the appropriate level. Safeguarding records and policies are up to date and reflect the most recent changes to government legislation. The record used to check the suitability of staff to work with children meets all requirements.

Pupils whom I met during the inspection told me that they feel safe at school. They are aware of different types of bullying and know how to stay safe online. Pupils told me that bullying is rare but, if it does happen, staff act quickly to sort it out.

Attendance is good, and only a few pupils are persistently absent from school. You have taken a number of steps to tackle persistent absenteeism, in collaboration with other agencies, but is too soon to determine the impact of this work.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school improvement plan are accurate and are closely woven together. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school. Minutes from meetings show that governors provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to you. They have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving, because of the detailed evaluation of data in the reports that you provide them with. Governors use the school's finances astutely to ensure that the school improvement priorities are achieved. However, governors have not identified the specific barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils at the school face. This means that their evaluation of the impact of the funding for disadvantaged pupils is not as sharp as it should be.
- You have a clear vision to continue to raise achievement and you are determined that all pupils at Roughlee CofE should thrive. The new assessment procedures ensure that teachers are accountable for the progress that their pupils make and that assessments are used accurately so that all pupils stay on track. Pupils told me that 'they love learning, because their teachers plan interesting lessons'. Newly appointed teachers have settled in quickly and work in partnership with you to secure consistency in teaching and learning across the school. The highly collaborative and professional culture that you have nurtured ensures that teachers and teaching assistants learn from each other and share what is working well.
- Since your appointment, you have focused on sustaining the strengths in the early years. You have developed the learning environment, inside and outside, for children to ensure that they have good access to learning throughout the day. The early years environment is exciting, bright and stimulating. It contains all relevant areas of learning and allows children to develop their skills and understanding. Children are highly motivated to learn and they are well supported by adults who know what their next steps in learning are, due to accurate assessment. As a result of these improvements, the number of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception class has risen and is now above the national average.
- Another key line of enquiry was the progress of the most able pupils in school. This has improved because of the excellent start that children now receive in the early years. Your records identify that the number of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading, writing and maths is rising rapidly across the school. Information which you provided and work in pupils' books confirm this to be the case. All groups of pupils have made good progress. As a result of the greater level of challenge provided to the most able and also the closer monitoring of their progress, this group of pupils is now making strong progress.
- The inspection followed up the progress made in phonics, especially for girls. There is now a consistent daily approach to the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. Lessons are organised effectively and meet pupils'

individual needs. Pupils are reaping rewards of the new texts that match accurately pupils' level of development. Pupils read to me with confidence and used their phonic skills to read unfamiliar words. As a result of these improvements, all groups of pupils, including girls, now make good progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders are provided with the necessary support and development so that they can have a greater impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning in the foundation subjects
- governors have a very clear oversight of the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils, so that they can evaluate more effectively the impact of additional funding for these pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Kynaston  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, a group of pupils and four members of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority. Documents were scrutinised, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, external audits and safeguarding checks. I reviewed pupils' achievement records and your checks on the quality of teaching. I also visited classrooms with you to speak to pupils, looked at examples of pupils' work, listened to them read, and observed their behaviour during lessons and as they moved around school. I examined child protection information and governor minutes. I took account of the two responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to six parents and carers during the day.