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Ms Zoe Lowe  
Acting Head of School  
Rawthorpe Junior School  
Rawthorpe Lane  
Rawthorpe  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
HD5 9NT

Dear Ms Lowe,

### **Short inspection of Rawthorpe Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2018, 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 February 2013.

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

Since your recent appointment as acting head of school, you have quickly developed a very clear vision for the future of the school. While your experience as a deputy headteacher has given you an insight into the running of the school, staff confirmed that you have made a seamless transition to headship.

Your confident use of data has enabled you to identify issues relating to pupils' progress and to take effective action to bring about improvement. For example, the prompt action you took to improve standards in mathematics has resulted in marked improvement after the dip in standards in 2016. Work in pupils' books shows that this improvement is continuing. However, you also recognise that more work is needed in order to increase the progress made by the most able pupils, particularly in using and applying the mathematical skills and knowledge they have learned.

Pupils' progress in reading has continued to improve. Pupils were keen to talk about their enjoyment of books, particularly those borrowed from the school library. Older pupils discussed how they have learned to enjoy a wide range of different authors. Pupils believe that increasing the amount and variety of books they read is contributing to their writing skills.

You recognise that pupils' writing skills are improving and many are now writing longer pieces of work than previously. However, you also recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that improvement continues. For example, work in pupils'

books confirms your accurate commentary in the school self-evaluation that pupils need to further improve the quality of their spelling, grammar and punctuation.

The close monitoring of pupils' progress that you carry out ensures that any pupils who are being left behind are quickly identified. Swift action to bring about improvement is put in place. This, coupled with your effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, has ensured that outcomes for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are improving.

The close links that have been developed between the infant and secondary school leadership teams and yourself have supported recent improvements. For example, shared checks on the quality of pupils' work have ensured that staff across the three schools are confident in their assessment of pupils' progress overall.

The school has a higher than average level of pupil mobility. This means that new pupils are regularly welcomed into school, often at times other than the start of the school year. Many pupils come from different parts of the world, for example Syria and Iraq. Many are new to English. You and your staff welcome them all and work hard to ensure that they settle quickly and successfully. For example, you have recently changed from teaching French to Spanish as a modern foreign language in some classrooms. This has led to effective support for the learning of several different groups of pupils. This empathetic and thoughtful approach demonstrates clearly how you value all pupils in the school.

Staff morale is high. They feel their efforts are appreciated by you and other leaders. They are particularly appreciative of the 'marginal gains' display, which you put up in the staffroom each week. Your weekly recognition of a member of staff whose work demonstrates that they have contributed over and above what is expected has helped staff to feel positive and proud.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were clear in their belief that their children are safe in school. Staff also believe that pupils are safe and know how to keep safe both inside and outside school. Staff commented that the training they receive is effective. Regular updates from leaders ensure that they are aware of any local or national changes. Pupils spoken to also agreed that they feel very safe in school. The responses from parents, staff and pupils demonstrate clearly the strong culture and ethos that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone across the school. Analysis of school's online records shows that staff frequently work closely with other professionals for the benefit of pupils and their families.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, one of my key lines of enquiry was the progress of disadvantaged pupils. I particularly wanted to find out how well the large group of disadvantaged pupils who attend is supported and how much progress these pupils are currently making. School data suggests that disadvantaged pupils are

making strong progress overall. Work in pupils' books supports this view. Many are now making similar and sometimes stronger progress than their peers and others nationally. This improvement is largely because of the very closely focused support given to disadvantaged pupils by school staff. This has enabled them to catch up with others nationally.

- However, while you and your senior leadership team are very clear about how pupil premium funding is spent, governors do not always have the same levels of understanding. Governors are also less clear about the details of the impact of spending on pupil progress.
- A further line of enquiry I identified at the start of the inspection was the progress of the most able pupils. 2017 school data showed an improvement in the progress of this group in all areas of the curriculum, but overall the progress and attainment of this group were lower than those of others nationally.
- Discussions with school leaders about checks carried out on pupil progress and work in pupils' books demonstrated that some improvement has been made. For example, the most able pupils are now clearly identified, and work set more closely matches their needs. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. In some classrooms, extra challenges are set particularly in mathematics. These give the most able pupils further opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, this is not the case in all classrooms and, as a result, progress is slower than it should be for this group.
- Looking more closely at the reasons for pupils' higher than average absence levels became a further focus for the inspection. School leaders are aware that, currently, attendance is just a little below that expected nationally. Last term, attendance figures were higher but, due to a range of concerns including pupil illness and a small number of holidays taken in term time, attendance has dipped again.
- School staff are diligent and relentless in their efforts to improve attendance overall. Strategies include working closely with parents to support regular attendance, collecting children and a 'drop in' breakfast club partially funded by Huddersfield football team. Attendance has risen overall. However, school leaders are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that attendance continues to rise.
- My final key line of enquiry focused on safeguarding. School leaders and staff have successfully ensured that a culture of safeguarding is present in the school. Parents spoken to were clear that their pupils are safe in school. Safety training is threaded through the curriculum. For example, in an assembly observed during the inspection, pupils learned how to develop their own 'moral compass' on actions they could take to stay safe. Through thought-provoking scenarios, pupils of all ages were helped to think more closely about the right course of action to keep safe.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are given sufficiently challenging work in both writing and mathematics to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable
- governors have a clear understanding and overview of the way in which pupil premium is spent and the impact on pupils' progress in the school
- levels of attendance continue to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, accompanied by senior leaders, I observed learning in classrooms across the school. I scrutinised a range of documents including those relating to the school curriculum, pupil progress and safeguarding children. I held discussions with school staff, the leadership team and groups of children. I took into account the responses from the 12 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey, and the 10 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also took into account the views of 10 parents spoken to at the start of the school day.