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Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Misselbrook-Lovejoy

### **Short inspection of Rotherfield Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 May 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in February 2017, you have made significant changes that have already had a positive impact on the culture and ethos of the school and the progress pupils make. Your initial evaluation of the school identified a number of areas that required immediate attention. You started by reviewing and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of leaders, teachers and support staff, and, where necessary, you made new appointments. With the support of your head of school and other senior leaders, you have implemented new systems and structures, including a new curriculum map and assessment system, to ensure consistency across the school. You have a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, particularly the teaching of early reading. As a result, staff receive regular training to ensure that there is a consistent approach. You admit that the pace of change has, at times, been challenging, though necessary. However, you and your staff have a clear vision of what you want to develop at Rotherfield Primary and an effective plan to achieve this. Staff morale is high, and pupils are proud of their 'new' school under your leadership.

You were keen on arrival that pupils, parents and carers and school staff felt included in creating a vision for the 'new' school and the decision-making process. Key appointments, such as the parental engagement leader, have built on existing good relationships and parental support. Together, you designed a new school uniform that pupils wear with pride and they are keen to explain the significance of

the emblem they wear on their jumpers. Your new motto of 'Growing Futures' permeates the school. You focused on rapidly improving pupils' behaviour by introducing clear guidelines linked to a colour system. Pupils can explain the positive 'gold' and 'silver' points they receive, and which poor choices result in other colours and actions. As a result, pupils' behaviour has improved dramatically. Exclusions for poor behaviour have reduced substantially. The school appears consistently calm and productive. Pupils show respect and listen carefully to each other and staff. As one parent said: 'He is inspired to learn and can now read, write and do mathematics very competently for his age.' Another parent remarked: 'I feel very involved with my child's learning' and 'We always have smiles in the morning on route to school.'

Governors are a committed and reflective group, who fully support the changes you are making. They too have undertaken a period of self-evaluation and, as a result, have increased in size to ensure that they have the necessary skills. They have also undertaken further training. As a result, governors can question you and your team effectively about the information you provide. Together with the local authority, governors regularly hold you to account for your school improvement work through the 'Project Group'. You and your team report to this group on the progress you are making at the school, and the impact of your actions on pupils' progress. The partnership working with Newington Green Primary School is proving to be highly positive. It enables staff and governors to share best practice, train together and check the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Plans are in place to develop these links still further. Like you and your staff, governors are rightly proud of the improvements to date.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL rightly prioritise keeping pupils safe. All staff undertake regular and appropriate safeguarding training, including on tackling extremism through 'Prevent' duty training. This ensures that they are vigilant about identifying any concerns and how they might share this information. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. Your DSLs work closely with a range of external agencies to ensure that families get early help when required, and that referrals are followed up in a timely manner.

Staff understand the risks pupils might face in the wider community, including knife crime, gang affiliation, female genital mutilation, domestic violence and deprivation. You ensure that pupils are given opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe, for instance while on line, and that parents can also access help and guidance. Year 6, for example, undertake Junior Citizen training to prepare them for life at secondary school and in the wider community. You regularly survey your pupils to ensure that you are tackling the issues that concern them the most. You ensure that they receive the right guidance and support.

You rigorously check on the suitability of staff to work at the school and keep careful records that meet statutory requirements. Governors check regularly that all

safeguarding arrangements are in line with statutory guidance. The school site is compact and very secure. Each area of the site is utilised imaginatively during breaktimes and lunchtimes, so that pupils can play in a safe and supervised manner.

One of your priorities is to encourage more pupils to attend school regularly and be on time. Your home school worker liaises closely with parents and pupils to reinforce the importance of regular attendance at school. There are already signs of improvement in this area, although you know that more needs to be done. In particular, you have identified the need to change some parents' perspective that sporadic attendance at school is acceptable.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since you joined the school, you have rightly focused on improving the progress pupils make from their starting points. You have done this in several ways. You began by focusing on the quality of teaching across the school. You utilised your strongest teachers and staff, providing opportunities for them to share best practice at both Rotherfield School and the partner school, Newington Green Primary School. Where necessary, you made new appointments, including subject specialists in Spanish, art and physical education (PE). You reviewed the role of teaching assistants and ensure that they receive regular and effective training, so that their support is of the highest quality. Your leadership team regularly checks on the quality of teaching and intervenes swiftly should further support be required.
- You have also introduced a new assessment system. This ensures that baseline assessments are accurate, targets aspirational, and that staff regularly check on the progress pupils are making. Teachers work with staff at Newington Green to check the accuracy of their ongoing assessments. In this way, you and your staff quickly identify any pupils who require extra support.
- This focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning has already had an impact on the progress pupils make. While pupils made average progress from their starting points compared to pupils nationally in 2017, this was a significant improvement from the previous year. Many current pupils across the school are now making good progress from their starting points.
- However, you have identified that some groups, for instance disadvantaged pupils, need to make more progress in order to catch up with pupils' achievement nationally. As a result, you are rightly continuing to focus on ensuring that teaching across the school is of the highest quality.
- Improving reading has also been a priority since you joined the school, especially early reading. The newly appointed literacy lead, together with the early years lead, has brought consistency and strategic leadership to the teaching of reading. They check on the quality of teaching, plan the reading curriculum and ensure that chosen texts are of the highest quality.
- You have restructured the school day to ensure that opportunities for a range of reading activities are interspersed throughout the curriculum. You have invested

heavily in classroom texts and resources and created a bright and modern library full of well-chosen books and reading areas. Pupils and staff are currently planning the launch of your new classroom reading corners to encourage reading for pleasure.

- Staff are well trained in the school's chosen phonics programme, which is delivered consistently throughout the early years and key stage 1. Your staff assess children's ability on arrival and group them accordingly for their phonics sessions. Teachers accurately record the children's progress, and children regularly move between the groups to suit their learning needs. Phonics sessions are complemented by one-to-one reading activities and revision of taught sounds and words, plus attempts at writing. Children enjoy this focus on learning to read and the fun activities organised by their teachers. As a result, information provided by you indicates that the vast majority of children in Year 1 this year will pass the phonics check.
- Staff choose stories, rhymes and texts carefully and these permeate throughout the school day. For instance, in the Nursery class, children could explain the story of the Gingerbread Man verbally and by using the soft toys. In a Reception class, children became animated as they told the story of the Three Little Pigs.
- Across the school, pupils are expected to take home books to read. You and your staff monitor this carefully and provide extra support to both parents and their children to make sure that this is a valuable experience. The reading journals encourage dialogue between parents and staff about the suitability of texts and teachers set activities around the books.
- In key stages 1 and 2, guided reading ensures that pupils can retrieve information, infer and empathise. Classrooms are literature rich, with attractive displays and texts. Daily story time is treasured. Reading across the school is highly valued and encouraged.
- Through these approaches, you have actively promoted a love of reading and given pupils strategies, routines and tactics to access a range of stories, texts and information in a nurturing and creative environment.
- You and your team are not complacent. You know that many of your leadership team are new and their initiatives need time to embed before you can begin to measure the impact of these on pupils' progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that all pupils make at least good progress from their starting points by:

- extending recent initiatives so that all parents understand the importance of helping their child attend school regularly and arriving on time
- ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high quality across the school, both in class and during small-group and one-to-one support
- continuing your development of leadership roles and responsibilities and checking carefully that recently introduced initiatives are having a positive impact on

pupils' learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your head of school and other senior leaders to discuss your self-evaluation and improvement plans. I met with representatives from the governing body and with the local authority head of school improvement for primary schools. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including curriculum information, referrals to external agencies and the register of safeguarding checks made on staff. I visited lessons with your head of school to gather evidence on particular strands of teaching, learning and assessment. I spoke to staff and pupils during informal times and in lessons. I listened to pupils reading. I took account of the 13 written responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire. No pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey.