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Miss Tammy Cooper
Headteacher
Ruswarp Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Ruswarp
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Dear Miss Cooper

Short inspection of Ruswarp Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have provided outward-looking, dedicated and insightful leadership which has driven the school's development. Along with your governors, you have accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The school's detailed self-evaluation and improvement plan clearly identify the priorities for improving the school further. Your recently developed assessment and pupil tracking systems now provide you with information to sharpen the measures of pupils' outcomes in your plan.

Leaders, staff and governors have worked hard to address the areas identified at the previous inspection. Since that time, there have been changes to the school's staffing and leadership. You have managed these well and put in place appropriate support and development for staff who are new to leadership roles, for example for the subject leaders for English and mathematics. This is helping to strengthen leadership capacity and expertise.

Your research helps to identify where you and you staff can find strong practice to bring back to your school to address the school's priorities. Collaboration with local schools and schools outside of your local authority has begun to have a positive impact upon your approaches to the teaching of reading and writing. There are early signs that this is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes in these subjects. However, you agree that you and your staff are still 'on a journey' with these developments and there is still more to do. Your developing peer review work

with other headteachers provides opportunities to share effective practice and to enhance your school self-evaluation approaches.

The provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is a strength of the school. You, your staff and governors have created a happy, harmonious school where pupils thrive. Your curriculum, caring ethos and opportunities for responsibilities all help develop pupils' citizenship skills. For example, your pupils were keen to tell me about the work of the school council, playground buddies and the worship and community committee. Your staff have worked to help develop pupils' resilience when your survey identified that this aspect of pupils' personal development required enhancing. This encourages pupils to 'have a go' when working in subjects such as mathematics, for example when they are completing problem-solving tasks.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They carry out appropriate checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe, including training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, staff and governors understand the safeguarding procedures and their own responsibilities. You and your staff work effectively with parents and other agencies. You have recently introduced an online system for recording safeguarding and pupil welfare, which has helped strengthened your monitoring and analysis of these incidents.

Your pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know the different forms that bullying can take and know that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. Pupils believe that behaviour at your school is good and that incidents of bullying are rare. You and your staff make effective use of systems to monitor behaviour and bullying. Parents agree that their children feel safe in your school and that staff ensure children are well looked after.

Inspection findings

- You and your leaders have responded promptly to the 2017 dip in key stage 2 pupils' progress in reading. You are also tackling the weakness in attainment in key stage 1 pupils' writing.
- In your school, each middle leader works hard to successfully fulfil several leadership roles as well as meet their class teacher commitments. You provide leaders for early years, English and mathematics with opportunities to visit other schools. These professional development experiences are helping your staff to identify effective practice that they can tailor to meet your pupils' needs. However, you recognise there is further work to be done to develop middle leaders' skills fully, because some of them are relatively new to these roles. Greater involvement with checking the impact of their actions and work on school self-evaluation and the school development plan would further strengthen leadership skills and capacity.

- The subject leader for English, who is new to this role this year, has accurately identified priorities for improvement and has adopted a well-structured approach to addressing these. Following research into effective practice at another school, she has revised the approach to the teaching of reading. This has initially started in upper key stage 2, with plans to improve the teaching across the school using a similar approach. Early assessment evidence is showing improved progress and attainment levels for older pupils. The focus has now moved to considering approaches to improve key stage 1 pupils' writing attainment and the quality of handwriting across the school. These plans are at a very early stage in implementation and you and your subject leader for English recognise that there needs to be a step change in developing this aspect.
- Strategies to improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling, such as the introduction of 'non-negotiables' of aspects of writing which teachers must cover and pupils respond to, are driving the improvement of key writing skills. Pupils' books show evidence of regular practice in these areas and this has had a positive effect on pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 6. As a result, in 2017 the proportions of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in the Year 6 grammar, punctuation and spelling test increased and were above the averages found nationally. Over the last two years, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who have achieved the expected levels in writing has exceeded the national average.
- Pupils receive regular phonics lessons and their outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved over the past three years. Consequently, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard has been above the national average for the last two years.
- The subject leader for mathematics has provided training for staff to develop the teaching of problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics. He has audited resources and organised the purchase of classroom resources to support these new approaches. Pupils' attainment of the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 compares well to national averages.
- Children generally start Reception with skills and achievements that are typical for their age. They make at least good progress and the proportion achieving a good level of development has been above the averages found nationally for the last three years. As a result, the vast majority are well prepared to start Year 1. However, your school's 2017 Year 2 results, particularly in writing, indicate that key stage 1 pupils' progress from these good starting points was not strong enough.
- During our visits to Reception, we noted very effective adult-led teaching supporting children's learning in writing and number work. The use of interesting approaches such as 'story sticks' inspires children to produce high-quality writing independently.
- The leader for early years works closely with staff from the nearby local pre-school. This is supporting children's transition into Reception. Through activities such as more regular visits by children into the school and sharing approaches to teaching, such as phonics and early reading skills, pre-school children are well prepared for their move into school.
- Pupils' absence levels were too high in 2016/17. The determined approach by

you and your staff has begun to reap rewards and overall attendance levels are improving. Where pupils and their families need support to reduce pupils' levels of absence, you have used a range of strategies, such as access to your breakfast club to improve attendance and punctuality. Your analysis shows improvements in attendance for several of these pupils.

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities. Regular link governor visits into school, detailed headteacher's reports and attendance by the chair of the governing body at termly meetings with you and your school improvement adviser ensure that governors are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recently introduced strategies to improve pupils' progress in reading across the school and writing in key stage 1 are embedded, so that the school's reading and writing results by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 at least match the averages found nationally
- subject leaders for English and mathematics continue to develop their leadership skills and increase their involvement with checking for school improvement and school development planning.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and your leaders for early years, English and mathematics. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I met with a representative from the local authority and reviewed their most recent report about the school. My discussions with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, provided me with additional information. I took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 28 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. I also reviewed 11 responses to the staff survey and the 23 responses to the pupil survey. Along with you, I visited every class to observe teaching and learning.

I listened to pupils read both within lessons and individually. I looked at pupils' English and mathematics work to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time. I considered information relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and bullying.