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Miss Wendy Walters
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Dear Miss Walters

Short inspection of Rudston Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 April 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 January 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 promotion to headteacher in September last year, you have continued to encourage pupils to 'be the best they can be'. Staff provide good role models to inspire pupils' positive thinking. Pupils achieve well because of the excellent relationships that they have with adults in the school. The bright, organised environment and care of staff provide a nurturing atmosphere within the school. Consequently, pupils' conduct is excellent.

Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and learning in the school and make well-informed decisions about the curriculum. Leaders and governors have made the best use of support from the local authority during a period of change in the senior leadership team to ensure continuity for the school. Governors make astute appointments. You have built a strong leadership team. Your effective deputy headteacher and senior leaders reflect your own enthusiastic approach towards the development of their own leadership skills. Together, you have built upon the existing strengths of the school through a considered approach to school improvement. However, leaders do not celebrate the strengths of the school clearly enough with parents and carers, particularly in relation to the management of pupils' behaviour.

The school has acted effectively on the recommendations from the last inspection. You provide staff with a range of opportunities to develop their skills and curriculum knowledge. Records show that training addresses whole-school improvement priorities as well as the development needs of individual staff. This has enabled teachers to

challenge pupils more effectively in their learning. However, we agree that the use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is not yet sharp enough. In particular, more could be done to raise disadvantaged pupils' attainment in their Reception Year and in key stage 1. This would enable a greater number of these pupils to achieve the highest standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong climate of vigilance in the school. Staff have a clear awareness of the latest statutory guidance and receive regular updates. Your open and honest approach ensures that staff feel confident to raise any concerns. These are acted upon swiftly to ensure that pupils are safe from harm.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The checks made on the appointment of staff are comprehensive and updated regularly. The relentless efforts of staff create a strong culture of safeguarding in the school that underpins all aspects of their work.

Pupils feel safe, including from bullying. The school invites a number of visitors to reinforce anti-bullying messages and to promote pupils' management of their own safety. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online, because of the effective support that they receive.

Inspection findings

- For this inspection, we agreed on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these was to see how effectively leaders use the funding for disadvantaged pupils to challenge them to achieve the highest standards in Reception and in key stage 1. Since taking up your role, you have acted quickly to review the use of the pupil premium funding. You have carefully analysed the needs of pupils and have rearranged support to meet these needs more effectively. The work of current pupils in writing and mathematics shows that they make steady progress in their Reception Year and in key stage 1. For example, children in Reception are responding enthusiastically to the expectation that they should complete a range of challenges without the support of adults. There are therefore early signs that the school is beginning to help disadvantaged pupils to achieve high standards. However, we agreed that this work is in its infancy and that the targets set for the use of this funding do not currently set high enough expectations for these pupils.
- We also agreed to look at how leaders are making sure that improvements to the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2, as evidenced by improved Year 6 outcomes in 2017, are being sustained. Governors' carefully considered investment in a new scheme for teaching mathematics is now paying dividends. The mathematics leader has introduced a system of increasingly complex mathematical challenges to support the new scheme. This has been highly successful in developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills, particularly in upper key stage 2. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils' progress in key stage 2 is good, and sometimes better. This is because teachers match work closely to the different abilities of pupils. Many teachers now ask questions that prompt pupils to explain and justify

their thinking. Pupils relish the challenges provided. The mathematics leader makes regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and provides clear feedback for staff. This supports their development and has helped staff to sustain and improve pupils' progress.

- Finally, we agreed to look at how effectively leaders and governors engage with pupils and parents. Parents are positive about the school. However, a small minority feel that not enough attention is given to resolving occasional examples of poor behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour is good and that bullying is very rare. They have enjoyed visits from other professionals promoting anti-bullying. They feel confident that staff manage instances of poor behaviour well. Their conduct around school and at playtimes is excellent. Older pupils enjoy their roles as peer mentors at breaktimes. Leaders have taken steps to improve the management of behaviour and they attach great significance to the importance of rewarding good conduct. The behaviour leader is knowledgeable and his checks on the way in which behaviour is managed are comprehensive. However, we agreed that the school does not always communicate well enough with parents about how rare incidents of poor behaviour are resolved.
- The school uses an array of digital media to communicate to parents. This keeps parents well informed about events in the school. These systems are also used to regularly showcase pupils' learning. Parents value this information and feel well supported to help their children at home. Parents feel that the introductory meetings with their child's class teacher help them to understand the expectations for the year ahead. Curriculum breakfast meetings for English and mathematics have also proved popular. The school actively listens to parents through consultations and questionnaires, and engages with their suggestions. However, evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the feedback to parents on how the school has acted upon their suggestions is not always clear enough. Pupils feel that their opinions are listened to by leaders. They value the roles they have and they are excited about planned projects such as the eco council's garden project.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- targets for the use of the pupil premium funding set even higher aspirations for disadvantaged pupils' progress so that a larger proportion achieve the highest standards at the end of their Reception Year and at the end of key stage 1
- communication with parents more clearly describes how leaders have acted upon parents' suggestions and the ways in which they successfully manage pupils' behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with leaders and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of the school's leadership and management. Together, we visited six classes. I conducted a large scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics from across the school and in writing in key stage 1. I also looked at the standard of children's work in the Reception Year. I reviewed documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I discussed a range of topics about the school's provision with pupils, both formally and informally. I observed arrangements for pupils arriving at school and observed their behaviour in class, when moving round school, and at breaktimes. I heard pupils read their own work during my visits to classes. I reviewed documentation, which included the monitoring of teaching and learning, pupils' current progress and attainment information, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I took into account 54 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as 32 responses to the staff survey and 32 responses to the pupil survey.