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Mrs Carolyn Smyth  
Headteacher  
Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant School  
South Street  
Rawmarsh  
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South Yorkshire  
S62 5QW

Dear Mrs Smyth

### **Short inspection of Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 November 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are passionate about providing children with a good start to their education. You and your deputy headteacher work tirelessly to model the expectations you desire to see in your school. Adults demonstrate high levels of care for the pupils and relationships are highly positive around the school. You have a clear vision for the school and have high expectations of behaviour. You have begun to develop the roles of other leaders. Occasionally, these leaders carry out formal checks on the quality of learning, but this is not regular enough and the information they gather is not used effectively enough to make further improvements.

Staff who are new to the school are helped to learn the school's systems quickly. This means that the approaches you use to help pupils are delivered with a good level of consistency. Pupils move around the school sensibly and show good levels of independence both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils are supportive of their friends and work together well in lessons. They listen carefully to instructions from adults and settle into their tasks quickly. Pupils show great interest in their activities and really stick at them, even if they find them difficult to complete. For example, a group of boys were completely absorbed when searching for and examining creatures in the early years outdoor area.

During the previous inspection, inspectors felt that there were occasions when teachers did not make certain that all pupils were working as hard as they could.

You have worked hard to raise adults' expectations of pupils and promote a culture where pupils feel that it is acceptable to make mistakes as part of the learning process. We watched pupils working diligently in lessons and using their time well to complete tasks. Little time was lost because pupils were well prepared for the start of lessons and were well supported by adults throughout the lesson. You have provided staff with training to further improve their subject knowledge, and this allows them to plan work that challenges all groups of pupils.

In the last inspection, inspectors found that sometimes the questions that teachers asked did not help pupils deepen their learning and secure their understanding. You have provided all staff with training to help them to improve their questioning skills. You have also carried out checks to provide staff with further advice. As a result, the questions that adults ask pupils have improved. When we watched lessons, we heard adults asking pupils questions that expected them to extend the answers they gave. Teachers used questions that required pupils to remember what they had already learned before applying this to their current lesson. Pupils were given opportunities to talk to their peers to clarify their answers and this helped them to respond more confidently in front of the class.

The previous inspection found that teachers did not always make full use of other adults in the classroom to maximise pupils' achievement. You have supported your new teaching assistants well this year. They have worked alongside you and your more experienced teaching assistants and have received relevant training. Teaching assistants are now utilised well in all classrooms. Teachers provide additional adults with the information they need prior to lessons. This helps them to support groups of pupils effectively throughout the lesson. Teaching assistants provide pupils with guidance while allowing them to develop good levels of independence. When teaching pupils how to read new sounds and unfamiliar words, teaching assistants demonstrate good subject knowledge. They have a good rapport with the pupils and pupils respond to this enthusiastically, working hard to complete the tasks they are set.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You carry out thorough checks when recruiting new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff follow the school's policies and procedures well to report any concerns they identify about pupils' welfare or well-being. Staff know exactly what to do should they have any concerns about a pupil or another member of staff. You provide staff with all relevant safeguarding training and update them throughout the year to ensure that they are kept aware of important safeguarding information. Pupils know what to do should they have any concerns and they say that they feel safe in school.

The proportion of pupils who were persistently absent was higher than the national average in 2017. You have worked closely with the local authority to support these families. As a result, the rates of persistent absenteeism have improved this year and are now below the national average. However, overall attendance has declined

and is below the national average. Examination of your attendance information shows that overall attendance is affected by a significant number of families taking holidays in term time. You and your governing body have begun to take steps to address this, but this has not yet had time to impact upon overall attendance figures. Similarly, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. This is something you have identified in your monitoring of attendance but is not yet targeted within your plans for the allocation of pupil premium funding.

## **Inspection findings**

- I wanted to find out how effectively you use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Assessment information showed that not enough of these pupils reached the expected levels in reading and writing in 2017. You identified this through the regular checks that you make on the progress of these pupils. Teachers now analyse this information and use it to hold detailed discussion with leaders about how to support these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have made good progress this year in each year group. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 have made very good progress from their starting points across key stage 1.
- You have identified that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. However, the plans you write to allocate the pupil premium funding lack detail and are not focused enough. The actions you plan are not matched closely enough to the wider needs of these pupils and do not show how you will check the impact of your work.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average last year. I wanted to find out how effectively pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported. When we watched lessons, we saw that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were well supported by adults. The activities that were planned for these pupils were well matched to their needs. Resources had been selected carefully to help them to learn. Evidence in books shows that tasks take into account the needs of these pupils and are well planned.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has good links with external agencies and draws upon their expertise when needed. Effective systems are in place to identify pupils who may have additional needs as early as possible. The plans that are written to identify the support needed for individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not precise enough. Sometimes, these plans do not refer to the specific needs of these pupils and this means that the actions are not well matched to their needs. As a result, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable across the school.
- I wanted to find out whether the most able children in the early years are sufficiently challenged. The proportion of pupils exceeding the early learning goals for reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average in 2017. When we visited the Reception classrooms, we watched children who were working enthusiastically on their activities. The environment is well organised and allows the children to develop high levels of independence. The guidance and

support that adults provide is good and this allows the children to establish the skills and attitudes they need as they move into key stage 1.

- There is a good range of opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. The most able pupils are given opportunities, through well-planned activities, to extend their writing and use basic punctuation. For example, a small group spent time writing sentences about spiders before debating who had used capital letters correctly. Records of children's work show a good range of opportunities for the most able children to be challenged. The proportion of pupils exceeding the early learning goals for reading, writing and mathematics remains below the national average. However, children, including the most able, make good progress from their starting points.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders carry out regular checks within their areas of responsibility and use these to make improvements
- the use of pupil premium funding is targeted more carefully so that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves
- plans to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are matched more accurately to their individual needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leader for English, the SENCo and the designated safeguarding leader. I considered the responses of four parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the four free-text comments received. I scrutinised all the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and pupils. You and I visited classes together in the early years and in key stage 1. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and your plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets

requirements on the publication of specified information.