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Mrs Hayley McNeill
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McNeill

Short inspection of Rawcliffe Bridge Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 February 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since joining the school as executive headteacher of both Rawcliffe Bridge Primary School and the neighbouring Rawcliffe Primary School, in September 2017, you have taken effective action to arrest the unacceptable decline in the standard of education. You have accurately identified strengths and weaknesses and are implementing an ambitious improvement plan. You have drawn on strengths in leadership and teaching in both schools to bring about improvement. However, teaching over time has been too variable in quality. While you have addressed the weakest teaching, this variability has negatively affected pupils' progress, which remains inconsistent across subjects and year groups.

You have maintained a strong sense of community. This was manifest, for example, in the whole school's enthusiastic, accomplished singing of 'We are the Champions', during assembly. Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils, are very positive. The vast majority of pupils say they enjoy school and that they trust their teachers and other staff.

Pupils' progress in mathematics, across the school, is beginning to improve, especially in key stage 2. This is because teachers are implementing, more successfully, an approach to teaching mathematics that helps pupils to develop better conceptual understanding and to become more fluent in calculations. Too few

of the most able pupils, over time, have achieved a high standard.

Generally, across the school, pupils' progress is improving. For example, more effective teaching in the early years is resulting in more pupils reaching a good level of development. Outcomes in reading for Year 6 this year are much improved. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 are making stronger progress. However, writing outcomes are not as strong as they are in reading in the majority of year groups. The progress of Year 1 pupils in reading and writing has not been rapid enough to help them catch up from low starting points at the end of the early years.

You have developed a more appealing, relevant and stimulating curriculum that sparks pupils' interests and motivates them. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, curriculum plans do not help pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding systematically and progressively enough, in a wide range of subjects.

The governing body did not prevent the decline in pupils' outcomes following the last inspection. Governors have tended to be too accepting of leaders' explanations without checking for themselves. Governance is, however, improving. You give governors information that helps them to see more clearly where the strengths and weaknesses are. As a result, they are asking more probing questions. Governors are, however, not tenacious in following up on the answers they receive to questions; for example by making more regular visits to school to speak with staff and pupils, and to see for themselves how things are improving. The governing body does, though, keep a close eye on safeguarding arrangements.

With your help, governors have considered how further to take advantage of the collaboration with the partner school. The governing body has consulted with parents and carers regarding a formal federation with the partner school. Federation of the two schools will take place in September, under a single governing body, drawing on the strengths of each of the current governing bodies. Concerns and questions about the benefits to the school of federation remain for a small minority of parents.

The local authority school improvement adviser knows the school well. He has challenged and supported you and other leaders, helping to identify what still needs to improve. The local authority, recognising the challenges facing both schools, has brokered a temporary support partnership with another school, where teaching has been proven to be effective. You have already agreed with this school appropriate, sharp priorities to help you improve teaching, learning and assessment further.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff understand, and act upon, their duty to report any concerns they have about pupils. You, and other safeguarding leaders, keep a detailed record of all matters relating to child protection in a way that helps you to monitor pupils' safety. You make sure the required recruitment checks are made on staff before

they take up roles. Minor omissions in the record of these checks were corrected during the inspection.

A small minority of parents do not agree that adults deal effectively with bullying. However, most pupils shared their views during the inspection and none had concerns about bullying. The vast majority agree that adults deal effectively with rare incidents of bullying. Pupils say, unanimously, that they have trusted adults they can speak to about any concerns they have.

Inspection findings

- Following the last inspection, pupils' progress declined, particularly in key stage 2, and especially in mathematics, but also in reading and writing. Too few of the most able pupils have reached the high standards of which they ought to be capable. Furthermore, outcomes by the end of the early years, and pupils' early reading development in Year 1, have been inconsistent over time. Pupils' development in phonics remains weak. These weaknesses are because of too much variability in the quality of teaching, exacerbated by some instability in staffing. Overall, progress is improving because you have regularly checked the quality of teaching. You have given direct feedback to adults about the effect of their teaching on pupils' learning and progress. This year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years has increased and pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 has improved.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Historically, leaders and teachers were not prepared for the revised, challenging national curriculum introduced in 2014. New resources and appropriate training are now helping teachers to better meet the needs of pupils. A new assessment system is effective in helping teachers to see, more clearly, the aspects of mathematics pupils have not yet mastered. Too few of the Year 6 pupils, this year, met the expected standard in mathematics because some basic conceptual understanding was not well developed. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 are making much stronger progress, including the most able pupils. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 are beginning to develop improved fluency in calculating.
- You have helped teachers to develop a more appealing and relevant curriculum. For example, I observed pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 as they tasted, and thought of ways to judge, the quality of different types of bread. Pupils, later, had a go at devising bread recipes and making loaves. The teacher asked probing questions that helped pupils to think and evaluate. Pupils enjoyed sharing their ideas with each other. Workbooks show that these sorts of stimulating activities are increasingly typical. Pupils benefit from visits and visitors to school, such as a mobile planetarium, a percussion workshop, a visit to an outdoor activity centre and a visit to a production of 'The Hobbit'. These and other experiences broaden pupils' horizons, enhance their experience and spark their interest. You have introduced purposeful and interesting homework tasks. However, leaders and teachers developing the curriculum across both schools have not planned systematically to make sure pupils acquire knowledge progressively in each subject over time. In addition, some subjects are taught less often than others,

so pupils learn less in history than in geography and science, for example.

- You have ensured that teachers include, in their planning, opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding. For example, older pupils have considered such questions as whether it is possible to be both a scientist and a Christian, being encouraged to form their own opinions. Pupils recently attended a festival of faiths. Mothers and fathers have been invited into school to engage in activities with their children that challenge gender stereotyping; dads baked, and mums made kites. These, and similar activities, are helping to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Plans are in place to deepen further pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and cultures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to secure improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that more of the most able pupils reach the highest standards, especially in mathematics and in writing
- the teaching of phonics improves, so that at least the large majority of pupils consistently meet the expected standard by the end of Year 1
- the curriculum is designed so that pupils can acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects progressively and systematically
- enough time is given to the teaching of each national curriculum subject, so that pupils learn and make progress equally well in all subjects
- governors are more tenacious in the way they challenge leaders and seek evidence to validate leaders' assertions
- the concerns of parents are resolved.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We visited each classroom together to observe teaching and learning. With the deputy headteacher, we examined a sample of pupils' workbooks. We discussed the effect of the actions you have taken to improve the school. I also held discussions with the chair of the governing body and the local authority school improvement adviser. I scrutinised documents, including the school improvement plan, notes of

the checks you make on the quality of teaching, governing body minutes, and notes of local authority visits. I examined documents and records relating to safeguarding and child protection. I scrutinised pupil assessment information. I held formal and informal discussions with pupils. I considered the responses of 40 pupils to the Ofsted online pupil questionnaire. I took account of the views of three staff members who responded to the staff survey. I studied the 35 responses of parents to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and reflected on 23 written responses and two email messages from parents.