

9 October 2018

Miss A Farrington
Headteacher
Rufford CofE School
Flash Lane
Rufford
Ormskirk
Lancashire
L40 1SN

Dear Miss Farrington

Short inspection of Rufford CofE School

Following my visit to the school on 2 October 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. During this time, you and the governors have appointed a deputy headteacher and created new classes to help to improve the quality of learning for pupils. There have also been considerable changes to the governing body, including appointing a new chair of the governing body. Together, this strong leadership team has created a warm, welcoming school where pupils and families feel valued and nurtured. The school's distinctive Christian ethos is strong. Pupils are respectful of others and treat each other with genuine care and compassion.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are happy to recommend this school which 'nurtures its pupils and instils strong positive values'. The vast majority of parents say that the school is well led and managed, and that staff respond well to any concerns they raise.

Pupils also speak positively about school life. They are happy and keen to learn. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and are proud to be pupils at Rufford School. They behave impeccably in lessons and around the school, displaying good manners and respect for staff and their peers. All pupils benefit from the principled and caring leadership provided by you and the deputy headteacher.

You and the governing body are aspirational for the school and its pupils. Governors are highly committed, caring and knowledgeable. Governors hold you and the team firmly to account to ensure that leaders and teachers continue to

deliver a consistently good education to pupils. They are passionate about educating the whole child and preparing them well to be good citizens as they grow and develop, both academically and spiritually. The local authority has confidence in the school and your leadership. It knows the school well and has been a valuable source of support in evaluating the school's work alongside leaders.

Governors and leaders have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Inspectors identified the need to continue to improve the quality of teaching. In response, staff worked, with support from the local authority, to ensure that teachers planned learning in mathematics which more accurately meets the needs of learners. Teachers now regularly require pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum, as evidenced in pupils' history, geography and science books which I looked at during the inspection. Following inspectors asking you to focus on pupils more tidily presenting their work, it is clear from the work seen in books, folders and around the school that pupils take pride in presenting their work neatly.

During the inspection, you acknowledged that further challenging the most able pupils to extend their writing skills should help them to reach their full potential. In addition to this, continuing to develop staff training and sharing good practice, to improve further the quality of teaching and learning, are priorities you have rightly identified in your plans for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding records, documentation and procedures are compliant and fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular training, and those responsible for safeguarding and recruitment have appropriate and recent qualifications.

Pupils feel safe in school and parents, staff and governors agree. Pupils say that if any incidents of bullying occur, these are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils feel actively involved in keeping each other safe and have roles of responsibility, such as 'digital leaders'. All pupils helped the school to promote a 'safer parking' campaign. Adults teach pupils how to stay safe online and pupils know how to deal with any concerns using 'close the lid' or the school's filter alert.

You work with a range of external agencies to help pupils to make positive, healthy decisions. All pupils say that there is an adult in school they feel able to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Younger pupils are reassured that they can let their class teacher know of their concerns through a 'worry box'.

You and the senior team are aware of the needs of pupils and liaise effectively with external agencies to support pupils and their families. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of this inspection, we considered several key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at how effectively leaders are improving progress for girls in mathematics.
- Current work seen during the inspection and discussions with leaders show that most pupils in Year 6, including girls, are working well towards reaching their age-related expectations. Plans are in place to monitor pupils closely and intervene rapidly to ensure that girls are making progress more in line with that seen in reading and writing.
- From their individual starting points, most pupils are making good progress. Leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in mathematics, but further developing the teaching of mathematics across all key stages remains a priority for the school. Leaders recognise that there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills. Securing mathematical fluency is identified in the school's plan for improvement.
- The second line of enquiry considered the attainment and progress of the most able pupils in writing across key stages 1 and 2. This was because in 2017 and 2018, a lower proportion of key stage 1 pupils achieved greater depth in writing compared to reading and mathematics. Similarly, in key stage 2, the progress of the most able pupils in writing dipped.
- From the Reception class to Year 6, pupils' oracy skills are strong. They are articulate and converse well with adults and other children, using considered vocabulary. The most able pupils are not yet transferring this fully into their writing. Teachers ensure that there are many opportunities across subjects for pupils to write in detail. Improving vocabulary and using it appropriately when writing is now the focus for staff.
- Another key line of enquiry looked at how well the school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Leaders and teachers promote the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils extremely well. The spiritual life of pupils across the school is strong. Pupils have time for daily worship. Collective worship is an integral part of school life, and high-quality display work, in folders and around the school, celebrates this aspect.
- The core values of love, forgiveness, reconciliation, respect, trust, joy, truth and friendship are central to the daily life of pupils. Pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong and understand the fundamental British values of the rule of law, mutual respect and individual liberty.
- Socially, pupils are active in the local community through projects such as gardening and links with the nearby nursing home. Pupils raise money for national charities and also donate food to a nearby homeless shelter. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and groups, such as Spanish, sport, drama, team-building and fencing, also contribute to pupils' good social development.
- Leaders provide high-quality experiences, such as a recent Islamic day, which enable pupils to develop some knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own. Pupils are tolerant and respect others who have different backgrounds and

beliefs to them. However, overall, pupils' cultural development is a less strong aspect of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers challenge the most able pupils to extend and deepen their writing so they reach their full potential
- they refine and further develop teaching and learning by ensuring that opportunities for staff coaching, training and sharing good practice are frequent and bespoke to the needs of teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen O'Neill

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You accompanied me on visits to classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance, leadership and management and the school's assessment information related to pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report. In addition, I undertook a review of the school's website.

As part of the inspection, I considered the views expressed by parents in the 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. I also spoke with parents informally in the playground.