

6 December 2018

Mr Ian Devereux-Roberts  
Headteacher  
Frodsham Manor House Primary School  
Langdale Way  
Frodsham  
Cheshire  
WA6 7LE

Dear Mr Devereux-Roberts

### **Short inspection of Frodsham Manor House Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 November 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 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 provide strong leadership and a clear sense of direction for the school. You are supported by a dedicated team of leaders who take their responsibilities seriously. Your self-evaluation provides a concise and objective analysis of the school's performance and identifies the right priorities for improvement.

The governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have been closely involved in drawing up the school development plan. This is very detailed and focuses clearly on raising attainment and increasing progress. However, it lacks precise measures against which leaders can assess the impact of their actions on pupils' performance.

Parents and carers have a high regard for the school. All the parents who spoke to me were very positive, commenting frequently on the friendly atmosphere, the good communication, the care taken by staff to support children and develop their confidence, the wide range of exciting activities available for pupils and the way that staff help pupils to make the transition from home to school and then into secondary school. These views reflected those of the parents who completed the online questionnaire.

Pupils and staff are also very enthusiastic about the school. All the staff who completed the online survey said that the school is well led and managed and that they are proud to work in a school where they feel motivated and respected. Almost

all the pupils who completed the online questionnaire would recommend the school to a friend. All those who spoke to me said that they enjoy coming to school. Several said that they would not wish to change anything in the school because 'it's just perfect as it is.' The pupils are well behaved, confident and enthusiastic. They relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors to the school.

A great strength of the school is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is fostered through, for instance, strong links with local churches, the study of the major world religions, fundraising activities, links with schools in Ghana and India, involvement in musical and theatrical events and residential visits in this country and abroad. The school and the staff have won an impressive array of local and national awards, reflecting the high aspirations and wide horizons that you are encouraging pupils to develop.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All the staff and almost all the parents who completed the online survey said that children are safe at the school. All the pupils who spoke to me said that they feel safe in school and on the way to and from school. There is a small amount of bullying, but when it happens, it is sorted out quickly and effectively. Pupils know which staff to contact if they have any worries or problems and are confident that they will receive any help they need. They are taught how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. The annual Internet Safety Week reinforces what is taught in lessons throughout the year, and the school works closely with parents to ensure pupils' safety at home. Because of regular practices, pupils know what to do in the case of fire. They are taught to swim and to keep themselves safe on roads. However, they are not taught how to keep safe near railway lines. Given the location of the school, this needs to be addressed.

The support for vulnerable pupils is strong and the school works closely and successfully with external agencies to provide additional help for any families who need it. All staff and governors have undertaken the necessary training on safeguarding and there are appropriate systems in place to check on the suitability of adults to work with children. The school site is secure and access to the building is carefully controlled.

### **Inspection findings**

- The last inspection report identified the need to improve the standard of boys' writing. I wanted to know how well you have addressed this issue. You were able to show me how, based on careful research and external advice, you have changed your approach to the teaching of writing, so that the activities are more appealing to boys. You have provided additional training for staff, as well as advice to parents on how they can help develop and reinforce their children's learning at home. In addition, you have improved your methods of checking on pupils' progress. During the inspection, I saw boys in the early years working with interest and concentration on developing their handwriting skills. Work in books provided clear evidence of boys' progress within and across year groups.

They are gaining confidence in using increasingly complex sentences and a growing vocabulary to write in a range of styles for a variety of purposes. Particularly impressive were the poems that boys had written. These showed a developing command of the conventions of poetry, particularly the use of rhythm and contrasting imagery. Your analysis shows that standards in boys' writing are improving in most classes, although there is further work to do, particularly with Years 4 and 5. There is also still a need to increase the proportions of boys reaching the higher standards in writing.

- The second area for improvement identified in the last inspection report was the teaching of science. To address this issue, you have invested in extensive staff training and a wide range of new resources, so that pupils have regular opportunities for investigative work. During my visit, I saw pupils in key stage 1 using their senses to determine what objects might be hidden in a series of containers. They showed a high level of interest as they discussed a range of possibilities. In a key stage 2 lesson, the investigative work focused on the insulating properties of various materials. The pupils were able to explain the reasons for their predictions, and when the results turned out to be different from what they expected, they developed several theories to explain this. The impact of such work is evident in the improved science results, which have been above average at both key stages for the last three years.
- Results in the early years were consistently strong from 2015 to 2017. I wanted to know whether this continues to be the case. Last summer, there was a drop in the proportion of early years children who reached a good level of development. You explained how this reflected the nature of that specific group of children. Your analysis shows that children currently in the early years are at a higher level than their counterparts last year. Therefore, standards are rising again.
- Last year saw a decline in mathematics results. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level at the end of Year 6 fell below average and no boys reached the higher standard. I wanted to know what your response to this has been. You have conducted a careful analysis of the specific areas of underperformance so that additional focus can be put on them. One such area was pupils' command of fractions. During visits to classrooms, I heard pupils talk confidently about how they had solved problems involving fractions. This showed the positive impact of previous teaching. The work in books showed that boys, as well as girls, were making clear progress.
- Another area that we discussed was the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You check regularly on the performance of these pupils. You were able to demonstrate that although they do not necessarily reach the standard expected for their age, they make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Attendance has been traditionally high at your school and there have been no exclusions. I wanted to know whether this strong record is being maintained. You showed me that it is. Attendance remains above national averages and you have excluded no pupils.
- The final area that I explored was the organisation of the curriculum. Your subject leaders provided convincing evidence that the school has clear systems

for ensuring continuity and development in pupils' learning across subjects and across year groups.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school improvement plan includes clear targets which they can use to measure the effectiveness of their actions to improve the school, especially in relation to the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
- the proportions of boys achieving the higher standards in national tests increase, so that they are at least in line with national averages
- pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe near railway lines.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I examined a range of documentation and discussed your self-evaluation with you and the deputy headteacher. I met six governors, spoke to the chair of the governing body by telephone and read the most recent report on the school by the local authority adviser. I discussed the curriculum with the assistant headteacher and two subject leaders. You and I visited lessons to observe teaching and look at books. We also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance. Together with the deputy headteacher, we discussed safeguarding arrangements in the school. I met eight pupils, chosen at random from key stage 2, and spoke to staff and pupils as I walked round the school. I examined the 19 responses to the staff survey and the 66 responses to the pupil survey. As well as examining the 35 responses to Parent View, I spoke to 17 parents and relatives as they brought their children to school.