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Mr J Foxwell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Foxwell

Short inspection of Romanby Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 2019, 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your calm, considered and conscientious approach to leadership has ensured the school's continued improvement. Leaders have successfully created a tangible team spirit and sense of community in the school. Collectively, leaders have established a strong culture of high expectation across the different aspects of the school's work. Leaders, staff and governors are aspirational for pupils and ensure that, as your school aims state, you encourage 'pride, respect, self-discipline and independence', and that you 'involve everyone in all aspects of school life'.

Staff are proud to be part of Romanby Primary School and feel well supported by the leadership team in all aspects of their work. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. They are well mannered, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground is of a very high standard. In lessons, they routinely display very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are articulate and keen to discuss their work and explain their views. Your recent efforts to equip pupils with the skills to reflect on their work, so that their understanding of how they learn effectively increases, is evident. As a result, pupils are reflective and thoughtful. They talk with confidence about their learning and how it might be improved.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school and say that their children are

happy to come to school. The vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive about the school. Comments included: 'I think, by attending Romanby Primary School, my children are receiving the best start in their academic life.' Another parent said: 'Romanby school has a fantastic caring culture and the headteacher knows the name of every child. The headteacher passionately cares about the progress our children make and this is reflected in the teaching.' While a third parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'I couldn't wish for any more in my child's primary school.'

The previous inspection report identified that leaders needed to accelerate pupils' progress in writing to reach even higher standards. The impact of your work to improve the quality of writing across the school is clear. Leaders have supported and challenged teachers to provide clear purpose and direction to pupils' writing. Pupils' books show strong examples of high-quality writing in a variety of contexts. These books clearly show that you have built on pupils' confidence to express their ideas and they do so in increasingly complex sentences and well-thought-out paragraphs. It is little surprise, therefore, that, in 2018, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in writing at the end of Year 6 were above the national averages.

Leaders, including governors, know the school very well and recognise where further improvements could be made. Your school development plan was written and developed in collaboration with all leaders and governors. It focuses on well-chosen areas for improvement. You have rightly identified aspects of pupils' outcomes that could be strengthened. One such area is the focus on improving the pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 2 mathematics, especially at the higher standard. You also outline the work needed to embed the actions taken to improve pupils' attainment in reading and writing.

Governors share your commitment to the school. They are resolute in their determination to ensure continued improvement for the benefit of all pupils. Governors ensure that they are appropriately trained and informed. As a result, they offer you an effective balance of challenge and support.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's records are clear, detailed and well organised. Staff and governors receive regular training covering various aspects of safeguarding. Consequently, they have a clear understanding of the school's policy and procedures on pupils' welfare needs. However, leaders are not complacent. They have recently reviewed their procedures and introduced changes aimed at further developing their record-keeping. Leaders also ensure that appropriate checks are made on staff, governors, volunteers and regular visitors to the school. Consequently, they make sure that they are suitable people to work with children.

Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and that there is always an adult that

they can go to for help. They speak very positively about how they are taught to stay safe, including when using the internet or social media. Pupils have a good knowledge of the different types of bullying. They say that bullying does sometimes happen and that, at times, other pupils can be unkind or say hurtful things. However, they say that this is 'very rare' and they are confident that staff always deal with such issues quickly and effectively. Pupils do not believe that bullying is a problem in the school.

Inspection findings

- Staff in the early years, including leaders, know the children well and ensure that their needs are well met. When we visited the Reception class, there was a positive, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. The children were greatly enjoying their learning and were keen to talk about odd and even numbers. Other children were keen to tell me the things that they had learned about Africa and about the 'invisible line that goes around the world'. One child recalled that it has a special name that begins with 'e' and 'If you live near it, the weather is hotter.' As a result of strong leadership and high-quality interactions and teaching, the children in the Reception class are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1. It is not surprising, therefore, that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year is consistently above the national average.
- Evidence from pupils' work and visits to lessons confirm that teaching, learning and assessment remain good. Over the last three years, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics have continued to increase. Leaders are not complacent. There has been a recent focus on improving the teaching of mathematics to ensure that all staff help pupils to develop a deep and secure knowledge of mathematical facts and concepts. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils' arithmetical knowledge and skills are improving. However, at times, the work that some teachers set does not challenge pupils sufficiently in different contexts. Consequently, in 2018, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving at the higher standard in mathematics was below the national average.
- In 2018, the proportions of pupils achieving at the expected and higher standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 were well above the national averages. Pupils demonstrate a love of reading and talk knowledgeably about their favourite books, their favourite authors and why they enjoy reading. The pupils who read to me were able to do so with fluency and a considerable degree of expression. They were able to talk about the imagery presented by the author and how this fired their imagination. They were also able to explain the different literary devices an author might use and were able to spot examples within the text they had read. Reading is taught effectively. Consequently, pupils make good progress. Above all, they enjoy reading.
- Leaders' work to improve writing and to ensure that pupils write with clarity and purpose has led to improved progress and attainment in writing. The walls around the school are used to celebrate pupils' writing. Your recent 'Writeflex' awards recognise those pupils who have made significant progress in this

essential skill. Pupils recently wrote to local businesses and community organisations asking if their artwork on the topic 'Gallery Rebels' could be displayed. These letters were strong examples of formal, persuasive letter-writing using suitable conjunctions and rhetorical questioning. Despite the evident improvements to pupils' writing, pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling at key stage 2 is below the national average. Work in pupils' books shows that their knowledge of grammar and punctuation has improved. However, pupils' spelling is weak, and teachers do not consistently make sure that pupils correct spelling errors accurately.

- Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), have a steadfast commitment to the best possible outcomes for every pupil. There is a shared understanding among all staff that the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is everyone's responsibility. The fact that every pupil is known and valued as an individual enables teachers to more effectively meet the needs of each pupil. As a result, pupils with SEND are making good progress towards their individual targets.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum has been carefully designed. It motivates and encourages pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. Pupils speak very positively about the exciting visits and activities that enrich their learning. Older pupils were excited by the outdoor education experiences and teamworking during their residential trip. The Reception class had recently enjoyed travelling together by train to visit the National Railway Museum in York. Your commitment to sport is notable. Teachers and pupils are rightly proud of the 'School Games Gold Award' that you have achieved. At the end of the inspection, several key stage 2 pupils were keen to tell me that they had won a cricket competition that day. Other pupils were looking forward to their acting roles in your forthcoming school play 'What a Knight'. The wide and varied curriculum is a strength of the school and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Pupils are keen to make the most of the opportunities available to them at school. They enjoy taking on a wide variety of voluntary roles, from lunchtime and playtime monitors to team captains and young leaders. These opportunities enable pupils to develop their leadership skills and to understand important concepts such as democracy, fair play and supporting others. As a result, pupils are confident, resilient and self-assured. They are well prepared for the challenges of secondary school and beyond.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the refocused approaches to the teaching of reading and writing are embedded so that pupils' progress continues to improve
- more pupils achieve at the higher standard by the end of key stage 2 in mathematics by ensuring routine challenge in lessons

- teachers improve the quality of pupils' spelling throughout the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Murray
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with your early years leader, your SENCo and your leaders of English and mathematics. Together, you and I visited classrooms to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I also looked in depth at pupils' writing and mathematics books and other work. I met with a group of pupils. I listened to eight pupils read. I also listened informally to pupils read during my visits to lessons. I took account of 42 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 26 questionnaire responses from staff and the 92 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I also evaluated recent information relating to pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I met with you as designated safeguarding leader and reviewed documentation and records about how you keep your pupils safe.