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9 December 2019

Mrs Nicola McMullon  
Rodmersham School  
Rodmersham Green  
Sittingbourne  
Kent  
ME9 0PS

Dear Mrs McMullon

### **Subject inspection of Rodmersham School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 November 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

### **Main findings**

Pupils at Rodmersham School are curious about the past. They enjoy the school's topic-based approach to learning history. Several topics across the year groups have a history focus. From Reception Year to Year 6, pupils understand the importance of history in age-appropriate ways.

From Reception Year, pupils begin to develop their historical knowledge. For example, Year 2 pupils learn about the causes of the Great Fire of London. Pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have a good understanding of the key features of several historical events by the time they move into key stage 2. However, pupils in key stage 2 do not always learn about disciplinary knowledge of how we explain the past. Pupils do not automatically connect historical concepts, such as parliament, democracy, civilisation or empire, across topics they have studied. This is because leaders have not fully considered how history topics across year groups relate to each other and what order they should be taught in. For example, from Year 1, pupils begin to understand the importance of the Houses of Parliament. The concept

of democracy is not developed further in subsequent year groups.

Teachers have strong historical subject knowledge. They use this to explain historical events very clearly to pupils. Pupils remember the things they have learned about in lessons. For example, in Year 1, pupils could explain why Robert Catesby wanted Guy Fawkes to help him to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Pupils readily join in with teachers' imaginative activities and talk animatedly about their history lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils can explain the significance and causes of the Battle of Britain.

You have ensured that, together with leaders and teachers, you have planned a history curriculum that takes into account what pupils need to know and teachers' expertise. You also make sure that the full breadth of the history national curriculum is taught. The subject leader for history is new to the role. She has quickly got to grips with planning out what pupils should know and remember by the end of each topic. Teachers said that this helps them to assess what pupils know and understand. Some teachers assess pupils' understanding by using 'quizzes' at the end of topics. In some year groups, pupils write about the things they have learned in 'diary entries', stories or letters. However, older pupils do not have enough opportunities to complete extended writing activities so that they can further their historical understanding and answer historical questions clearly.

## **Evidence**

During this visit, I met with you, the early years leader, the subject leader for history and a group of teachers to talk about the history curriculum. I visited lessons in the early years, Year 1 and Year 6. I met with two groups of pupils to talk about their learning in history. I evaluated work in pupils' books. I scrutinised curriculum planning.

## **Context**

Rodmersham School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are 104 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British background. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportion who are disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion with SEND is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is slightly above the national average. Nearly all pupils join the school at the start of the early years and stay until the end of Year 6. Staffing at the school is stable.

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

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham

**Her Majesty's Inspector**