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Mr David Manby
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Dear Mr Manby

Short inspection of Rauceby Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2015, you have created a cohesive and collaborative leadership team. You and your team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and, together, you are taking effective action to tackle the areas in need of further improvement.

The culture of the school is based on the values of forgiveness, honesty, kindness, aspiration and equality. All aspects of the school's work encompass these values. The school is collaborative, friendly and welcoming. Staff and pupils work well together and are keen to support one another. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are happy to speak with visitors and keen to share their views.

A strength of the school is the work to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enriching experiences. These are included as part of the curriculum and as additional activities after school. For example, a local beekeeper has visited the school. During the inspection, pupils in key stage 1 were excitedly going to their after-school Valentine's disco. Pupils appreciate and enjoy these opportunities. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles. For example, pupils in Year 6 applied to become 'ambassadors'. Part of their role involved presenting to a whole-school assembly.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around school. Staff and older pupils help younger pupils to recognise how to moderate their lively behaviour at social times. Pupils are kind and considerate. They take care of one another. For example, pupils in Year 1 explained that they would help someone who had fallen in the playground, or that they would reassure a pupil who was upset. Pupils recognise the difference between bullying and unkindness. They say that bullying is rare and any instances of unkindness are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils enjoy school but attendance is just below average. This is linked mainly to the persistent absence of a few pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity. They recognise and accept differences in others.

The last inspection identified the need to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum. In September 2016, you introduced a new, topic-based curriculum designed to interest and inspire pupils. Teachers plan activities which encourage pupils to transfer their learning from one subject to another. For example, pupils use their skills in mathematics when creating graphs in other subjects. You introduced 'learning journey' books in which pupils include work from all the subjects across the curriculum. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to write for extended periods, using a variety of different genres. For example, pupils in Year 2 used their knowledge of castles, as part of the history curriculum, to create information texts. In addition, pupils are expected to apply their learning across the curriculum. Thus, when working in their cross-curricular 'learning journeys', pupils use their knowledge and understanding of writing for all pieces of work. The quality of pupils' writing has improved as a result.

A key aspect of the strategy to improve pupils' writing is the use of the school's assessment and feedback policy. This is not having the desired effect. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of expectations and do not apply the policy consistently. This means that pupils do not always understand how they should improve their work.

You have taken action to improve the effectiveness of subject leaders. Initially, you helped them to interpret information about pupils' progress. You have also worked with leaders to develop their understanding of monitoring and evaluation activities. You introduced pupil progress meetings, where middle leaders meet with senior leaders and are held to account for the progress of individual pupils. This has led to a recognition that some pupils, and particularly the most able pupils, are not making the progress they should. Subject leaders now check thoroughly the effectiveness of provision in the areas for which they are responsible. They evaluate the impact of their work and report to senior leaders and the governing body.

Governance is strong. Governors are knowledgeable and have a wide range of skills, expertise and experience. They undertake regular monitoring and evaluation activities. This means the governing body maintains an up-to-date and clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further improvement. It holds leaders to account and does so effectively. For example, the governing body checks the spending of the pupil premium funding and challenges leaders on its impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Systems and processes are straightforward and routinely followed. You recognise, however, that the quality and organisation of record-keeping are not as sharp as they could be. Staff recognise their responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. They have received relevant and up-to-date training. Leaders involve external agencies as appropriate and follow up referrals when they have concerns. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding conducts appropriate monitoring activities, such as checking the school's recruitment records and carrying out an audit of safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection findings

- Reading is a strength of the school. Teachers encourage pupils to read often and regularly. Pupils value the welcoming library area and they enjoy their responsibilities as librarians. You have introduced a new approach to teaching reading. This provides high levels of challenge and encourages pupils to read a wide variety of texts and genres. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has been consistently above the national average. Pupils make good progress. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in reading by the end of key stage 2 was considerably above the national average.
- Leaders have used the positive ethos around reading to encourage pupils to develop their writing. For example, leaders have set up a school blog to which pupils contribute by writing about their reading experiences.
- You have introduced a set of 'non-negotiables' for each year group which indicate expectations for pupils' writing. Teachers provide regular reminders and pupils aspire to meet these expectations. For example, pupils in Year 1 know they should use capital letters and full stops accurately and check that they have done so.
- The curriculum now provides greater opportunity for pupils to write for extended periods. You have adapted whole-school approaches to writing to meet the needs of different cohorts of pupils. For example, teachers have identified the need to develop stamina for some pupils. To do this, they have introduced 'the daily write', where pupils write for a concentrated period to develop their extended writing.
- Teachers place great emphasis on improving pupils' handwriting. You have agreed a consistent writing style which teachers model in all examples of their writing. This includes when they write in pupils' books and on the board. From an early age, pupils are taught to write in this style and pupils' handwriting has improved.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was lower than the national average. You have asked all staff to challenge the most able pupils to help them reach these

standards. Not all staff, however, routinely use the information they have about what pupils are able to do to plan activities that meet their needs. In particular, teachers do not move the most able pupils on to challenging work quickly enough. Some pupils say that they find some of their work too easy.

- You have introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics that provides greater opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. This is helping pupils to make progress towards achieving the higher standards in mathematics. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this strategy on pupils' progress.
- You have communicated clear expectations for pupils' attendance. The importance of attending regularly is emphasised through newsletters and in other communications with parents. Pupils understand the impact of poor attendance and are keen to avoid missing learning time. Attendance, however, is just below the national average. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is considerably higher than the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff understand the expectations of the school's feedback policy and apply it consistently
- pupils understand precisely what they need to do to improve their work
- teachers routinely plan activities that meet pupils' different needs, particularly ensuring that they move the most able pupils on to challenging activities more quickly
- they develop strategies to improve pupils' attendance, particularly among pupils who are persistently absent.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Lincoln, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders and staff. The inspector also met with members of the governing body.
- The inspector visited classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 with senior leaders.
- The inspector spoke with a group of pupils and with others informally in their lessons.
- Forty-one responses and 38 free-text comments from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. The inspector also spoke with parents at the start of the day and took account of a letter from a parent.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the lead inspector looked at information published on the school's website.
- The inspector looked at a sample of pupils' books with senior leaders.