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Mrs Corrine Penhale
Headteacher
Rossett Acre Primary School
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Dear Mrs Penhale

Short inspection of Rossett Acre Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 June 2016, 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Although a degree of instability contributed to some dips in performance in 2015, overall attainment and progress remain good. You have worked closely with governors and the local authority to build a strong leadership team with clear responsibilities. Phase and subject leaders are equipped to challenge and support teachers. Your recently appointed deputy headteacher has an increasingly accurate and detailed overview of pupils' progress. Senior and middle leaders are closely involved in the monitoring of standards of teaching. Leaders have addressed many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have improved. Regular meetings to review pupils' progress are enabling staff to address underperformance more effectively. These are leading to improving rates of progress across the school.

You, your senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's current performance, its priorities and the actions needed to secure further improvement. The skills of some leaders need further development to sharpen their evaluation of the impact of actions. New appointments and initiatives to address the lower attendance and progress of key groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, are having swift and significant impact. Leaders are tracking the progress of the most able pupils closely. While their overall attainment remains above that achieved by the most able nationally, they did not make as much progress as expected in reading and writing. Leaders are focusing their actions to ensure that the most able are consistently stretched and challenged.

Teachers enrich the curriculum with creative activities and make imaginative and purposeful use of the school's considerable outdoor spaces. Leaders check teachers' assessments of the standards of pupils' work and teachers work with other schools to check the accuracy of their judgements. These activities are helping teachers to establish an accurate view of standards as they move to new systems of assessment.

The governing body has strengthened its expertise and changed the committee structure to ensure that it effectively holds school leaders to account. By setting clear objectives and through regular performance review meetings, governors ensure that the momentum for continued improvement is sustained. The governing body has built partnerships with the local authority and neighbouring schools that have contributed to a stronger leadership team. Governors are continuing to explore partnerships that will further strengthen these changes. The effects of recent changes are leading to improvements that are evident in pupils' progress and positive staff morale. The majority of parents and carers are happy with the school. A few lack confidence due to previous instability in staffing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders and governors take their responsibilities very seriously and recently carried out an audit of safeguarding practice. Teachers and governors receive up-to-date training on a range of key safeguarding issues. Pupils are able to discuss how the school has made them aware of potential hazards, such as online threats. Both parents and pupils agree that pupils feel safe at school. Rigorous checks ensure the suitability of those working at the school. Actions to promote safety are well supported by external agencies. The school works increasingly closely with a wide range of partners to support the social and emotional welfare of children.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching is enabling children to make good gains in their learning. Well-planned activities in science and mathematics engage pupils and encourage independence and a sense of enquiry. For example, in science, teachers used questioning to check pupils' understanding and to probe deeper their understanding of natural forms. The quality of written and verbal feedback has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have a keen awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils within their classes and better planning is closing gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils. However, occasionally, the most able pupils are not challenged as well as they could be.
- Closer monitoring and better support for disadvantaged pupils have led to higher attendance and better progress by these pupils across the majority of year groups. As a result of more targeted support, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making progress that is equal to their peers in many year groups. Their attendance has improved significantly. The most able pupils have achieved levels of attainment at the end of key stage 2 that have largely exceeded those achieved by the most able nationally. Teachers are providing more challenge for the most able. Leaders will

evaluate the impact of these actions by measures of improved progress in reading and writing by the most able.

- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Over the past year, increased opportunities have been provided for sports. External coaches have strengthened the coaching of pupils and extended the professional development for staff. Teachers are using outdoor spaces with imagination and purpose to develop learning. For example, gardening is used to develop pupils' scientific understanding in areas such as seed germination and plant growth. Extra-curricular provision is strong and the majority of pupils participate in the activities on offer.
- In the early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently above the national average. Increasing proportions of boys are achieving a good level of development, and performance gaps between boys and girls are smaller than those seen nationally. Children benefit from a mixture of activities that engage their interest and sustain their attention. Improvements outdoors have considerably enhanced learning opportunities for children.
- Effective planning and clear routines help to ensure that pupils behave well in the majority of lessons. Pupils are consistently polite and courteous and show respect for one another and adults. The school's effective actions to support the personal, social and emotional development of pupils have led to significant improvements for individual pupils. A few pupils say that disruption can affect their learning in some lessons. On occasion, teachers do not enforce standards of behaviour consistently.
- Leaders have acted robustly to address the dip in reading that occurred in 2015. A new guided reading programme is in operation across the school. Pupils acknowledge that they are now reading a greater amount and a wider variety of texts. Pupils are using better strategies to focus on the meaning of text. Follow-up comprehension activities and spelling and grammar tasks check their understanding well. These initiatives are improving attainment and progress at key stage 2 for all groups. Overall gaps in the performance between boys and girls have narrowed.
- Governors have done much to raise their profile within the school community. They have recruited new members with specific skills and a new chair of governors. A governor with a background in journalism is helping to improve communication. They regularly attend parents evenings and parents forums. They are making more visits to school to inform themselves about the impact of leaders' actions to bring about improvement. They have high expectations and use rigorous procedures to hold school leaders to account. They closely measure the impact of school developments and ensure that improvement is sustained.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- continue to develop leaders' skills in monitoring and evaluating the impact of improvement strategies
- improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all pupils meet the demands of a more challenging curriculum and to stretch the most able
- communicate to parents the positive impact of leaders' actions on the quality of education and pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and senior and middle leaders. I also spoke to representatives of the local authority and a group of governors. I talked to a group of pupils at lunchtime and discussed their work in visits to lessons. I undertook learning walks with you and the deputy headteacher in all key stages. I examined the school improvement plan and other documents, including the school's self-evaluation and monitoring information; assessment information on current progress; attendance information and pupil tracking and intervention documents. I examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record and local authority review documentation. I took into account 94 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, 39 free-text responses, one parental phone call, 243 responses to the online pupils' questionnaire and 42 responses to the staff questionnaire.