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Mr Sheldon Parkin
Headteacher
Ravensthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School
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Dear Mr Parkin

Short inspection of Ravensthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 2017, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You took up the post of headteacher in September 2015 and brought with you a calm, focused ambition to make learning a great experience for everyone. It is clear that there is a united vision for improvement, with leaders, staff, governors and the local authority clear about the strengths of the school and the aspects that need further development.

You are ably supported by two recently appointed deputy headteachers who are driving improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. Their strong subject knowledge is enabling them to lead by example and support staff in implementing strategies that are focused on improving pupils' progress. You agree that developing the role of middle leaders to work with the strong senior leadership team will further increase the capacity for improvement.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school. All parents spoken to said that their children are happy. Many spoke positively about the activities which the school invites them to, such as class assemblies. I spoke to parents in the weekly parent and child workshop who said that this welcoming and relaxed session was something they looked forward to each week.

The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled

effectively. Information technology is successfully embedded throughout the curriculum. For example, in guided reading sessions pupils access different texts as well as games apps on devices which use questioning to consolidate learning.

There is a higher proportion than the national average of pupils who have an education, health and care plan for their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Provision for these pupils is highly effective in supporting their individual needs and consequently helping them to make good progress from their starting points. Funding for all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is directed well to support their learning. Leaders make a commitment to adding to these funds from the school budget to ensure that the pupils' needs are fully met. An improved partnership with the infant school means that staff now gain a better understanding of pupils' needs as they enter the school, so pupils get off to a much better start.

You are rightly proud of the improved results in 2016 at the end of key stage 2. Rigour around specific priorities for improvement, such as a focus on developing reading fluency and comprehension, brought about these higher standards. However, leaders have rightly identified that the most able pupils do not make progress that is as strong as other pupils, particularly in reading and writing. Current work of Year 6 pupils shows that they are reaching the challenge of higher standards, but across other classes in school challenge for the higher-ability pupils is still variable.

School assessment systems provide direction for the next steps to be taken by teachers, along with leaders' thorough checking of pupils' work in books and lesson observations. Pupil progress meetings are focused and carefully check the progress of individuals throughout the year so that appropriate support can be put in place. However, leaders have not measured the progress of pupils and groups of pupils from their entry to the school, and so do not have a clear enough view of pupils' outcomes over time.

Many pupils and their families do not speak English as their first language. Teachers take every opportunity to model high-quality English speaking skills and children are encouraged to read aloud across the curriculum each day. Teachers' strong subject knowledge in grammar, punctuation and spelling ensures delivery of high-quality teaching in this area and as a result, pupils' application of these skills in their reading and writing is excellent.

The board of governors, mostly new to their roles at the end of 2015, have a wide skill set. They know the importance of their role in appropriately supporting and challenging school leaders to provide the very best education possible. Governors have worked closely with the local authority on matters such as the recruitment of leaders, financial management and teaching and learning, and value its support.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors understand that safeguarding pupils is of the highest priority. Leaders have ensured that robust systems are in place which are checked regularly by different personnel. As the designated safeguarding lead, you work in close partnership with the school safeguarding support officer to continually check that training for all staff is up to date and that everyone knows what to do if a concern arises. There are clear, effective procedures for the induction of new staff and for visitors to the school. There is also a good understanding of possible risks to pupils, how to spot potential problems and where to seek appropriate support. Work with other agencies is strong and records of involvement are thorough and efficient, with cases frequently monitored.

Pupils' attendance is a concern to leaders, as they know that this not only impedes pupils' progress, but also creates a potential safety concern. Attendance has been below the national average for the last few years and persistent absence has been particularly high. Leaders and administrative staff follow up absence rigorously. They have worked closely with families, and education welfare officers from the local authority where necessary, to support improvement. As a result, figures for this year show an improvement, with the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent now in line with the national picture.

Inspection findings

- Pupils have superb attitudes to learning. Behaviour in classrooms is focused and purposeful, and productivity is high. Pupils know that they are at school to learn. As one pupil said, 'Teachers here want you to have a better future: they help us to do this.' Pupils demonstrate great appreciation of everything staff do to improve and enhance their learning. They spoke with animation about what they had learned through events such as World Book Day, fundraising for Comic Relief and school trips. They are confident to say what helps them learn best in school, such as lessons that are exciting and helpful resources.
- Improvements in English and mathematics are strongly led by the two deputy headteachers. Middle leadership of other areas is not yet clearly defined, but senior leaders are clear that this is a next step in improvement.
- Work to improve outcomes in writing is illustrated in the better consistency in presentation and focus on direction to the next steps in learning seen in pupils' books. Pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. However, the most able pupils are not always given work that challenges them to reach higher standards in reading and writing, so they do not all make the same strong progress as other pupils. Moderation processes, in school and with teachers in other schools to standardise the quality of pupils' work, are ensuring better teacher confidence in making accurate assessments against the national expectations.
- In mathematics, leaders' direction to embed skills and understanding in calculations is clearly evidenced in pupils' work across the school. Misconceptions are quickly addressed so that learning continues to move forward. All teachers

are using a daily strategy for pupils to progress through stages of learning; however, the way this is directed is restricting progress. Pupils of every ability work through each task, rarely getting time to complete the final task, which is a reasoning activity. Pupils of all abilities do not get the opportunity to apply their skills independently and develop their reasoning skills.

- Leaders have made sure that teachers and teaching assistants have access to a range of training, which addresses priorities on the school improvement plan as well as individual staff needs. As a result, staff confidence and skills have developed – impacting positively on learning in the classroom.
- Effective links have been established with Diamond Wood Community Academy, the infant school where most of the school's pupils transfer from. Leaders and staff across the two schools are now working together on a variety of training and school improvement initiatives, as well as sharing valuable information about individual pupils moving to the junior school. Consequently, learning for pupils between the two schools is more seamless.
- As part of leaders' aspirations to deliver exciting and memorable learning, there is a focus on pupils developing skills across a broad and varied curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to approach their work as scientists and historians, for example. One child said, 'The teachers make the lessons fun. When it is fun it gets into my head more quickly and I can remember it.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children of all abilities are encouraged to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics
- the most able pupils are supported in making strong progress in reading and writing
- the role of middle leaders is developed, with a clear rationale for the role they play in effectively supporting the strong senior leadership team in school improvement
- there is a clear view of pupils' starting points so that pupils' progress can be more accurately checked over their time in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection you and I spent time together in classrooms and looking at pupils' work. We discussed your evaluation of the school, the resulting action plans and the impact of this work. We looked at the progress that pupils are making using the school's assessment system and your analyses, including information about disadvantaged pupils.

I met with leaders, staff, governors, pupils, parents and the local authority partner.

I scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance, the quality of teaching and learning, external reviews of the school and responses from parents, staff and pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires.