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Mr James Rourke
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Dear Mr Rourke

Short inspection of Lord Deramore's Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 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 September 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 joined the school last April, and have worked quickly to ensure that you have clarity about what works well in the school and what needs to improve. You have quickly enlisted the support of staff and governors and have the confidence of parents to make the necessary changes. Governors have been highly effective in influencing the design and build of the new school. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and considerate. Three quarters of parents responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They were unanimous in their belief that the school is well led and managed and all would recommend your school to other parents. You, your staff and governors are determined that pupils will learn through a stimulating curriculum, which gives them exposure to a wide range of subjects and experiences. Consequently, pupils are excited about learning and demonstrate excellent learning behaviours.

At the last inspection, your predecessor was asked to raise the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress. Children enter the school with skills and abilities broadly in line with those typically seen for their age and make good progress through Reception. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved for three years in a row and is above the national average. In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was in line with national figures in writing and mathematics but slightly below in reading. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress was in the top 20% of pupils nationally in reading, but in the bottom 20% for progress in writing. Progress in mathematics was average when compared to national figures. You have identified the reasons for these anomalies,

which are partly due to the high mobility of pupils arriving at and leaving the school during the school year. Many pupils join the school from other countries and had no prior knowledge of the English language.

You urgently introduced precise tracking systems, to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress from their different starting points. You and your staff have worked successfully to ensure efficient and accurate assessment of pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics. This has enabled staff to match learning carefully to what pupils can do. Teachers' expectations of what pupils will learn are high and in the main, pupils are rising to those expectations. This is leading to higher proportions of current pupils working at standards expected of their age. However, some low-prior-attaining pupils are not making rapid enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to demonstrate higher-order mathematical skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and your governors have prioritised pupils' safety at all times, even though this has been challenging for the duration of the building of the new school. The current development of the school grounds and conversion of the old school buildings have been assessed for risks and appropriate signage and fencing are in place to ensure pupils' safety. You have ensured that all visitors to school, including contractors, have received appropriate safeguarding checks. All staff have been trained in basic safeguarding awareness and several staff are trained to a higher level to ensure safer recruitment of new staff and to spot potential signs of radicalisation, for example. You discuss pupils' safety weekly with your staff and governors receive regular reports on safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- During this one-day inspection, I wanted to find out how effectively you have supported teachers to improve pupils' progress in writing and how well phonics is taught. I also wanted to explore how well teachers meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and the most able in school.
- You quickly identified teaching of writing as an area that needed improvement, and put into place concise plans to improve this area of pupils' learning. You and your literacy leaders delivered a series of staff meetings through the autumn term to develop teachers' skills and help them to examine, discuss and judge pupils' progress more accurately. This enabled staff to quickly identify gaps in pupils' learning and to alter lessons accordingly.
- After only one term of this approach, you are able to demonstrate accelerated progress across almost all classes in school. Work in pupils' books shows over two thirds of pupils across school are now working at standards expected for their age. Higher proportions than in the past are working at greater depth. In turn, this is having an impact on the overall picture, with more pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in each year group. Despite this, pupils with low prior attainment are still struggling to

make the rapid progress needed, in order to catch up. Gaps are opening up between this group of pupils and others in school.

- Pupils at the end of Year 1 have traditionally achieved well in phonics, with the exception of one year group where they struggled to achieve the phonics screening check even at the end of Year 2. Some pupils in this class have particular challenges to overcome, which made attaining the phonics check earlier in their school career difficult. They have now secured their use of phonics and are beginning to use phonetic strategies to help them to read and write unknown words with greater confidence. Work in pupils' reading and writing books shows that this is not typical and that the majority of pupils have learned to master phonics through systematic and effective teaching while in Reception and Year 1.
- You have introduced very precise approaches for ensuring that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need. These include launching a 'passport' system, written in partnership with parents, that identifies the bespoke support given to these pupils. The governor with responsibility for pupil premium funding regularly visits school to check on the impact of extra resources on pupils' confidence and skills. Additional teaching or mentoring provided by adults in school is successfully meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils, so that your assessment information shows that almost all are now making strong progress overall. Differences between disadvantaged pupils and others are now diminished in writing and are reducing in reading and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they work hard and are productive in mathematics. Teachers plan series of lessons that help pupils to learn basic concepts well. However, sometimes the most able pupils are working through too many problems before moving on to the next steps in their learning. There is too little opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their reasoning in mathematics or to apply the skills they have learned in order to develop mastery of mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- low-prior-attaining pupils receive the support they need to make accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers more precisely plan challenge for the most able in mathematics so that pupils can develop reasoning skills and apply these to mathematics in a range of contexts.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met throughout the day to discuss different aspects of the school's work and visited lessons together. I met with five representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding procedures and looked at assessment information. I took into account the views of 14 responses of staff to the school's own staff questionnaire and considered 165 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire to parents. I talked to pupils about their learning in lessons and at lunchtime.