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Alison Willis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Willis

### **Short inspection of Rushton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2019, 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 June 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your deputy headteacher and governors have driven significant improvements across the school. Leaders have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas where it can further improve. The governing body has effective monitoring systems in place and, as a result, governors fully understand the work you do. Your self-evaluation of the school is accurate and detailed and you have clear and focused plans for improvement.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and well mannered and are clearly proud of being part of the Rushton Primary School community. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient learners and treat mistakes as learning opportunities. They support and respect each other in lessons and on the playground. They enjoy fund-raising activities and seeing the results of their efforts in new equipment and resources.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, describing it as 'one big family'. They know that staff will always listen to concerns and act upon them promptly. You are held in high regard by parents, pupils, staff and governors.

The multi-academy trust provides good support which has helped you make improvements and given you, your staff and governors the opportunity to see excellent practice in other schools, and also to share your own strengths with others. This support, along with your open-minded and forward-thinking approach

to leadership and school improvement, means that the school continues to thrive.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' attainment and accelerate progress by ensuring that, in mathematics, teachers plan activities that build on pupils' learning and, in line with the school's own policy, consistently offer them clear guidance that informs pupils precisely what they should do to improve their work. Teachers now review learning regularly throughout the lesson and pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their own learning. Teachers offer feedback, both oral and written, and adapt the activities to ensure that pupils are making progress. This is clearly impacting on pupils' achievement and more pupils are now attaining standards typical for their age.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that, in writing, all pupils, including the most able, act consistently and promptly on advice they receive from their teachers, with teachers being rigorous in checking that they do this. Writing tasks are now clearly linked to pupils' targets. They receive detailed feedback, both orally and in writing, from their teachers. Key stage 2 results have steadily improved and are now above national averages.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are vigilant of pupils' welfare and they have positive relationships with them. Staff attend regular training and understand their responsibilities and the processes to follow. Staff and governors are aware of the new guidance and statutory information. Pupils say they feel safe at school; they told me that they always have someone they can talk to and staff will always help them.

All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations and were particularly clear on how to stay safe online, both at school and at home. Pupils know the difference between bullying and falling out with friends. They told me that they do not experience any bullying at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have clearly identified that not all pupils achieve as well as they could in mathematics. Leaders have carried out extensive research alongside other schools in the trust. Your deputy headteacher has also attended a series of mathematics conferences and shares examples of good practice with your teachers. You have gathered ideas to better support pupils' learning, including greater opportunities for pupils to problem solve and use their reasoning in mathematics. In lessons, we saw teachers use effective questioning to probe further into pupils' understanding. Pupils clearly enjoy and respond well to this dialogue in class and they told me that their teachers always ask them 'why?', 'how do you know?' and 'is there another way?' Teachers are encouraged to challenge all pupils, not just the most able pupils.
- You have introduced 'fluency Friday', when pupils have extended time to develop

and improve their skills in mathematics. Current assessment information, as well as work in books, demonstrates that this is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. In lessons, we saw examples of where the teachers' input was challenging pupils. However, the follow-up activities did not always match this level of challenge for all pupils. This was also evident in books, where we saw some examples of the same tasks being completed by pupils of differing abilities and year groups.

- The curriculum is rich and broad. Work in pupils' books clearly demonstrates the wide variety of topics covered in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of topics and particularly enjoy the themed international week. The curriculum is well planned and monitored by the deputy headteacher. She ensures that there are opportunities for repetition of skills, while being flexible enough to make sure that the learning engages the pupils. Skills such as resilience and independence are woven into the curriculum. While different cultures are explored during international week, the teaching of religious education is not deeply embedded within the curriculum. Pupils could not tell me which different religions they had learned about. Pupils' work and displays also showed limited evidence of cultural diversity being celebrated.
- The introduction of reading for pleasure time every day has been well received by the pupils, who say they now talk about books more and are encouraged to read more challenging texts. They enjoy the opportunity to read in the different environments you have set up around the school, including the outside reading pod. Reading standards are high across the school.
- There has been a steady decline in the number of pupils leaving the early years at a good level of development. You and your early years leaders are aware of some of the reasons for this decline and have worked hard to address key areas of development. The early years leader, supported by you, uses data and assessment to identify areas where children are not making as much progress as you would like. Activities and learning opportunities are carefully planned to match these. The early years leader has attended training and, as a result, the continuous provision is more varied and includes greater opportunities for science and technology work. We saw examples of how pupils plan and review their work independently. The balance of the early years and key stage 1 curriculum is managed well.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further develop the teaching of mathematics so that work accurately matches the pupils' needs
- they make sure that teachers plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Ellers  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and shared my key lines of enquiry. I also met with three members of the governing body. I spoke formally with a group of pupils from years 3 to 6 and informally to many others throughout the day. I considered the responses of parents to Parent View, including the free-text comments, and spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. We visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work. We viewed a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, case studies, attendance figures and information regarding pupils' progress across the school.