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Mrs Jane Carson
Headteacher
Roselands Primary School
High Wood Road
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Dear Mrs Carson

Short inspection of Roselands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have also ensured that your staff team has responded promptly to halt the very noticeable dips seen in pupils' writing outcomes, particularly for boys, at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 and 2018. You understand that you now need to maintain this improvement, so that all pupils become very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Your team has succeeded in maintaining favourable outcomes in reading, across the school. You continue to develop leadership at all levels and have made good headway in sharpening the school's systems to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning, particularly for those supported through the pupil premium. You have worked closely with your team to begin to review the school's curriculum and make some improvements.

Governors know the school well and make a strong contribution to its effectiveness. Frequent visits from representatives of the local board of governors are tied closely to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. This helps to ensure that the visits are suitably focused. Governors also keep a clear record of any questions arising from their visits, any challenge they provide to leaders, and the impact of any challenge they offer. This helps to shape later discussions about how the school can continue to improve.

I immediately noticed the calm, content and settled atmosphere in the school. Most pupils participate and engage in learning activities very enthusiastically. There is a productive 'buzz' in lessons as you walk around the school. If asked, pupils quickly become animated about their experiences at the school and indicate strongly that

they are proud to be a pupil there. Leaders have successfully created a school environment in which it is seen as a positive trait to achieve well and celebrate achievement. Pupils are appreciative of the broad range of extra-curricular activities available to them. These activities play an important role in developing pupils' confidence and wider skills. A high proportion of pupils are learning to play a musical instrument, and pupils speak proudly about their musical performances.

Almost all of those parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire spoke highly about all aspects of the school's work. Pupils also spoke very positively about their experiences at the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained to keep them abreast of the latest statutory guidance and understand the potential risks to children's safety. They follow the school's systems well and ensure that clear records of concerns are shared and maintained. Good communications with external agencies are secured, when required, in the event of any issues arising.

The chair of the local governing body, in particular, has a very strong oversight of the school's systems and processes to keep children safe. Her annual audits, which take the form of termly checks, help to ensure that the bar of expectation is set high. The checks also identify areas that need to be further improved. For example, the quality of risk assessments has been sharpened following a finding from a recent audit.

The single central record of checks on adults employed at the school is accurate and very well maintained. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after when in school.

Inspection findings

- It came as no surprise to you when I explained that my visit would focus mainly on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in writing, particularly for boys, and for those supported through the pupil premium funding. It also came as no surprise to you when I outlined my plans to take a closer look at provision for the most able pupils in your school, and investigate why more of them didn't achieve the higher standards by the end of key stage 2. There was no element of surprise because you and your leaders know the school thoroughly, have identified the issues for yourself and are well on the way towards implementing your well-considered plans to address them.
- The school has maintained its effective teaching of reading across all age groups. This is reflected in the sustained positive outcomes for pupils in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. You rightly recognise that in order to write well, pupils need to have secured strong reading skills for their age. Maintaining these high standards in reading has been one of your key priorities in supporting the improvement of pupils' writing skills. You made the decision to invest in a wider range of challenging, age-appropriate reading books for boys. Discussions with

boys indicate that many take pleasure from reading and appreciate the range of books available in the school.

- The quality of pupils' written work is improving quickly across key stage 2 and an increasing proportion are writing at higher standards. Effective teaching ensures that pupils, including boys, think carefully about what they are going to write before they start. They also demonstrate a good awareness of how to check and improve their writing in a range of contexts and subjects. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to write in different subjects across the curriculum. This has helped to build their confidence and writing stamina. Pupils are very aware of the technical features required in different styles of writing to make it effective. Leaders' strategies to support the development of pupils' spelling skills, another key weakness in the last few years, have been successful. The school's spelling policy was reviewed in detail and the resulting improvements have been consistently implemented by staff. Pupils take pride in their written work. This is supported well by vibrant displays in classrooms and around the school, which celebrate high-quality writing. Classroom displays and prompt cards also provide pupils with useful tools to refer to, for example in relation to vocabulary, to support the further improvement of their written work. A list of 'non-negotiables in writing' has been drawn up by leaders for each year group, and shared with parents. This has helped to clarify and raise expectations of parents and pupils and gain a greater consistency of approach.
- Leaders and staff know individual pupils supported through the pupil premium very well. This is important, as the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is rising. The support provided to these pupils in lessons is effective. Weekly phase meetings, attended by teachers and learning support assistants, include the opportunity to review the learning of individual pupils, identify where further support is required, and discuss any potential barriers to their next steps of learning. Termly reviews drill down into the learning of individual pupils in greater depth. Leaders have also successfully engaged pupils supported through the pupil premium in school trips and wider activities by using the funding to subsidise events for pupils. These approaches are resulting in gaps closing between disadvantaged and other pupils. A play therapist and counsellor, employed by the school on a part-time basis, has also helped to remove barriers to learning for some disadvantaged pupils by improving their behaviour and focus in lessons. Though the key work is happening on the ground to support disadvantaged pupils, the school's published plan for the pupil premium is not clear enough. It does not identify clearly enough the expected impact of pupil premium funding on the outcomes of pupils.
- Leaders are considering the make-up of the school's curriculum effectively, in order to improve the quality of education and outcomes for all pupils. For example, leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum content in each year group, to ensure that it is sequenced effectively and provides sufficient challenge. In some subjects, work is already under way to make links with the secondary school in the trust, to clarify the expectations of pupils throughout their primary and secondary school years. Productive partnerships have also been established with other primary schools in the trust. Leaders continue to expand the school's wider curriculum, for example through building in an increased range

of visits and visitors and through extending the broad variety of clubs on offer to pupils. Through effective assessment, leaders are also aware that pupils' knowledge in topics is less well retained in some subjects. Leaders understand that they must now consider how this knowledge could be repeated or reinforced in different subjects to help pupils to permanently remember it.

- Most-able pupils are generally well catered for at the school and take full advantage of the school's broad curriculum offer. Teachers carefully consider the questions they ask of these pupils to make them think more deeply. However, leaders understand that the proportion of these pupils who achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 must be increased and sustained over time. Staff take account of the progress made by the most able pupils in phase meetings, meetings to discuss pupils' progress and subject leaders' monitoring of teaching. However, they do not typically scrutinise their progress and consider how they could help them further as closely as they do for other groups of pupils, such as those supported through the pupil premium.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a sharpened focus on the most able pupils, to ensure that they achieve their full potential in all subjects
- leaders' published plans for pupil premium funding make clearer the intended impact of the funding on pupils' outcomes
- the school's curriculum links more closely with the school's assessment systems, so that more complex concepts that children understand less well are repeated over time and in different subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior leaders and other leaders, school office personnel, a learning support assistant, the chair and one other representative of the local governing body and the executive headteacher of the trust. I also held a telephone conversation with your improvement partner from

the local authority and spoke informally to three parents in the school grounds as they dropped their children off at school. I gathered a range of evidence to judge the impact leaders are making on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes. This included observations of teaching and learning in a sample of classes across the school, jointly with you. I evaluated pupils' current work across different subjects and over a wide range of abilities. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your self-evaluation and the school's plans for continued improvement.

I spoke informally with pupils during lessons and also met formally with a group of pupils to consider their views. Policies and procedures for safeguarding were checked and examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and individual cases where referrals have been made to external agencies.

I took account of the 73 parent responses that were provided during the inspection time to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 39 free-text comments. The views of staff were considered from the 24 responses to the staff online questionnaire.