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Mr Matthew Rawling
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rawling

Short inspection of Repton Manor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 March 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your ambitious, skilful and nurturing leadership has reaped considerable rewards in this rapidly growing school. The school has more than twice as many pupils on roll than at the time of the previous inspection, and nearly nine times as many as when the school opened in September 2012. You have ensured that the leadership capacity in the school has kept pace with this incredibly rapid expansion. Consequently, parents and pupils remain overwhelmingly positive.

You are well supported by your effective deputies. Your well-placed confidence and trust in the teams of passionate, enthusiastic and committed middle leaders and governors empower them to contribute well. Together, you know exactly what the school does particularly well, identify pertinent current priorities and share the longer-term vision.

Following your excellent example, leaders' carefully considered and reflective approach means that a clear and convincing rationale underpins key decisions and actions. Leaders use extensive and rigorous self-evaluation, including meticulous analysis of how well pupils do in English and mathematics, to craft precise, detailed and effective plans for improvement. Leaders make frequent and varied checks that improvements are on track, adjusting and refining their plans where necessary. Governors share your ambitions and are realistic about where the school is currently on its journey. Leaders have made prudent use of published research into effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to influence the school's strategy. Careful analysis of the impact of individual spending decisions informs future actions

and spending. Disadvantaged pupils tend to make at least similar progress to that of their peers and often better.

In many different guises, pupils have a strong say in influencing the school's direction of travel. You and your leaders ensure that pupils' views, opinions and involvement in making decisions, directly and indirectly, are a core part of driving improvement. Pupils rarely miss school. Overall attendance rates are well above national averages. From early years onwards, the pride, enthusiasm and confidence of pupils is harnessed and cultivated in meaningful learning opportunities. Pupils, staff and leaders convey a genuine passion about inspiring a love of learning, rather than merely working to influence external performance measures. The current emphasis on securing greater depth of pupils' learning, particularly in the wider curriculum (the foundation subjects), is already starting to pay dividends. However, although early signs are very promising, it is too soon to see whether the currently developing curriculum will lead to the best possible outcomes in foundation subjects over time for pupils, as intended.

You and your leaders have successfully continued to develop the very effective teaching found at the previous inspection. A purposeful and industrious atmosphere permeates the school. Teachers and teaching assistants draw skilfully on a wide range of questions to check and extend pupils' understanding and resolve any misconceptions. You and your leaders share a strong conviction about what works best in the classroom. Together, you take great care to ensure that the improvements you strive for are deep-rooted and not gimmicky. Senior leaders keep closely abreast of where the most effective teaching is, and where there is more scope for further refinement.

The general pattern for current pupils is one of rising standards year on year. At the end of early years and key stage 1, standards are typically above national averages, and sometimes markedly so. The school's own assessment information shows that current key stage 2 pupils are achieving similarly well. In the school's highly unusual context, the previously considerable number of pupils that arrived part way through key stage 2 means that published data about their outcomes in recent years has been more variable. In 2017, higher-than-usual proportions of disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in Year 6, added further complexity to the picture. That said, you and your team successfully overcame these challenges to secure progress in writing across key stage 2 that has placed the school in the top 20% nationally for the last two years. Year 6 outcomes in reading and mathematics at key stage 2 were less favourable. Recent Year 6 leavers who had attended the school for longest, or since it opened, made much better progress, and typically exceeded national averages at the end of key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

The welfare and well-being of all pupils has a high priority. Leaders take deliberate action to ensure that this encompasses each and every pupil, not just those whose circumstances may make them potentially more vulnerable. The school's chosen commitment that staff will visit every child at home, regardless of their age on

entry, helps to establish constructive relationships between home and school. Leaders and staff convey a detailed knowledge of families. Parents have high levels of confidence in the work of the school to keep their children safe. Staff responsible for carrying out and coordinating checks of the suitability of adults to work with children are well trained, knowledgeable and confident in their approach. All checks are diligently and systematically recorded on the single central register.

Staff are alert to early warning signs that there may be a concern about individual pupils, and use the school's effective systems for sharing these. Records of such concerns and the resulting follow-up are well organised and detailed. Leaders take prompt and rational action and are tenacious in following up concerns. Established links with other professionals and agencies, and well-constructed referrals, mean that concerns shared by the school routinely lead to additional help. Leaders are unafraid to advocate strongly in pupils' best interests if the level of potential vulnerability changes over time.

Inspection findings

- Reflective and constructively self-critical about your own practice, you are quick to recognise and encourage the talents of others. Subject leaders feel empowered and well supported. Staff who answered the questionnaire unanimously agreed that they are encouraged to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for pupils. This open and inspiring leadership has created an ambitious culture and determined vision.
- You have full confidence in the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' capabilities. Extensive and well-documented cross-checking of the judgements teachers make about pupils' attainment and progress, within and beyond the school, lends rigour to this process. Indicative of the absence of complacency in the school, you chose to commission further checks by the local authority specialist adviser, and have local-authority-approved moderators among the staff team. Leaders use the information gathered from teachers' assessments extremely well to ensure that standards are rising securely. Close consultation with staff and pupils about the assessment and feedback policy helped ensure the optimum balance between a reasonable investment of time spent by staff for the maximum difference for pupils.
- Current tracking of teachers' assessments shows much more consistently strong pupil progress in reading and mathematics than indicated by recent key stage 2 performance data. Most pupils' learning is at least at the standard expected for their ages, with growing proportions exceeding age-related expectations. Talking to pupils, observing them in lessons and sampling the work in their books reveals similarly positive indicators. As pupils become proficient in interpreting print, there is a strong focus on teaching pupils the skills that allow them to fully understand and appreciate what they read. Staff and pupils use mathematical vocabulary precisely, with pupils using this knowledge to engage in productive mathematical discussions during lessons. Logical sequences of work help pupils to build their skills and fluency securely, deepening their understanding through applying mathematics in different ways. Pupils are able to give competent

explanations of the mathematics they are learning.

- Your rightful current focus on securing greater depth of learning is becoming an increasingly routine part of classroom practice. Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to hone their literacy and numeracy skills in varied contexts. Speaking to randomly selected pupils of different ages, the depth and recall of this term's learning in foundation subjects is impressive. Although your curriculum for foundation subjects has been evolving over the last two years, important aspects are still relatively new. Leaders have already undertaken prompt and meaningful checks of how well recent changes are being implemented in classrooms. However, these improvements have not been in place for long enough to see a sustained impact on pupils' progress. Leaders' systems and methods for checking this thoroughly are still, understandably, developing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics continue to rise so that they are above national averages
- they check thoroughly that the evolving curriculum supports pupils to make substantial and sustained progress over time in foundation subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I worked closely with you and your deputies throughout the inspection. Accompanied by each of you in turn, I visited seven lessons. While in class, I spoke with pupils about their learning, views and experience of school. I also reviewed a wide range of work in their books. I met with a group of subject leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. The views of the 109 pupils, 115 parents and 39 staff who elected to participate in the confidential surveys were considered alongside other evidence. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records about the school's work, including scrutinising arrangements to safeguard pupils.