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Tracy Withers  
Headteacher  
Cosby Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Withers

### **Short inspection of Cosby Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 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, senior leaders and governors have a precise and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which need improvement. This has enabled you to put in place a focused and appropriate plan to further improve pupils' outcomes. This is known and understood by all.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have provided pupils with an exciting and engaging curriculum, which inspires their imaginations and helps to develop their key literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils enjoy school and are rarely absent. There is a purposeful atmosphere of learning in lessons. Pupils are polite and articulate, and they respect and trust their teachers to help them do their best.

All pupils who I spoke with told me that behaviour is good at the school and on the rare occasions when a pupil misbehaves, teachers deal with it swiftly and appropriately. The school's own records on behaviour and bullying corroborate this. However, a number of parents who responded to Ofsted's free-text service expressed concerns about behaviour at the school. Leaders and governors acknowledge that more work needs to be done to communicate to parents the positive work which the school is doing in this area.

Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in the early years and the proportion of

pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have been above national expectations. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has also been consistently above national expectations. However, you acknowledge that pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was disappointing. You have investigated the reasons for this, and identified that pupils struggled to apply the skills which they had learnt. Therefore, you have provided more opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in lessons and through homework.

Leaders have revised the mathematics curriculum to provide well-planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. You have ensured that this starts in the early years. Leaders have provided staff with training in mathematics and this has improved their knowledge of how pupils master key mathematical skills. Pupils apply the mathematical skills, which they have learnt over the week, to unseen questions on 'Challenge Fridays'. This has improved their confidence and resilience to have a go. Evidence seen during the inspection demonstrated that pupils now have a better understanding of key mathematical skills, such as rapid number recall and fractions. As a result, they can clearly explain the best methods and calculations needed to solve problems. However, leaders are aware that this remains a whole-school priority to ensure that pupils can now consistently transfer this improved knowledge to their learning.

Your school development plan rightly focuses on further improving the proportion of pupils who attain the higher standards at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have provided training for staff, so that they can plan learning for the most able pupils which provides them with the appropriate challenge to make the rapid progress which they are capable of. The most able pupils have learning 'passports' with personalised challenge targets. Leaders have ensured that pupils and parents have been involved in creating and reviewing these targets. The most able disadvantaged pupils are also working with the school's learning mentor to ensure that they make good progress. Current school data indicates that pupils are on track to achieve at least in line with national expectations in the higher standard in all subjects this year.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You are the designated safeguarding leader and you are supported in this role by another senior leader. You are both suitably trained and keep your knowledge current through regular online updates. Leaders and the governing body complete annual audits to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully. Records are detailed and of high quality. They reflect the determination and tenacity of staff to ensure the best provision and care for pupils. Leaders put in place effective early care for pupils to prevent problems from escalating. They work with external agencies to provide additional support to pupils and their families when needed. All staff receive regular and appropriate training and demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about issues such as e-safety. Pupils recognise and are understanding of diversity. This means that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

### **Inspection findings**

- The school joined a multi-academy trust on 1 February 2017. The trust is led by a secondary school, with teaching school status, and includes two other local primary schools. You are one of the strategic lead headteachers for the teaching school, with responsibility for the primary offer. This partnership supports your continued focus on school improvement and provides staff with access to a variety of training and professional development opportunities. It also ensures that leaders remain outward-facing and can share best practice about teaching and learning to further support pupils' progress.
- You work within this network to check that teachers' assessments are accurate. Teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that is appropriate for pupils from their starting points. Leaders regularly monitor assessment information on pupils and provide timely intervention to any pupil who is falling behind.
- Leaders have identified that more pupils need to reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2. Therefore, teachers now plan learning to challenge the most able pupils. Evidence of this was seen during the inspection, but it is too early to judge the impact of this yet.
- The governing body acknowledge that pupils' outcomes in 2016 were not good enough. Evidence in the governing body minutes demonstrates that governors challenged leaders as to why this happened. The governing body have confidence in leaders that pupils' attainment and progress will be back in line, at least with national expectations, this year. The governing body will continue to hold leaders to account to ensure that this happens. As one governor said, 'we do not have an ounce of complacency'.
- Leaders have changed the whole-school approach to teaching reading. Every pupil has been recently assessed to ensure that they are reading books which are appropriate for their ability, including the most able pupils. Pupils complete reading passports which encourage them to read a range of different genres, both fiction and non-fiction. The pupils who I spoke with all enjoyed reading and recommending books to each other. Pupils learn about the features of different text types in lessons and regularly practise skills such as summarising, inference and deduction in their newly introduced reading journals. Current school information indicates that pupils will achieve above the national expectation in reading this year.
- Your middle leaders for English, mathematics and the most able pupils have recently rewritten action plans for the areas which they oversee, to support whole-school improvement.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils continue to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
- more pupils reach the higher attainment standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6
- the work of the school is better communicated to parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Sally Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you, senior leaders, representatives from the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors, and the executive principal of the multi-academy trust. I listened to pupils reading and spoke with a group of key stage 2 pupils about their school experience. You and I visited classes and examined pupils' workbooks. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement planning, attendance, and minutes of the governing body meetings. I took account of 73 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 68 responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff or pupil surveys.