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Mrs Lowden
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lowden

Short inspection of The Curzon CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 2015, 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 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and the school is continuing to improve. Leaders and governors have high aspirations and expectations for all pupils. Parents recognise this, as did a recent inspection of religious education. You are keenly aware of any dips in pupils' attainment and are constantly seeking to improve the school and outcomes for pupils. This has been highlighted by the reaction to a disappointing set of Key Stage 2 mathematics results in 2015. In response to this, school leaders have introduced a number of initiatives relating to the teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics across the school. Leaders monitor these measures closely, with work in mathematics books showing that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have made better progress this term.

Leaders and governors have acted effectively on the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. In Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils in writing has risen over time, with the proportion of pupils meeting and exceeding expected levels of attainment typically above the national average. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. By the time they reach Year 6 they are able to discuss and comment on each other's work, suggesting improvements to their classmates in a mature and responsible manner, as you and I witnessed in a literacy lesson during the inspection.

School leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning using a range of evidence sources. Officers from the local authority work with you to confirm judgements, as do colleagues from the partner schools with whom you have made links. Governors set challenging performance targets for you and your teaching staff, holding teachers and leaders accountable for these targets being met. Salary increases are only given on successful achievement of performance targets and you have addressed underperformance when necessary. As a result of consistently strong teaching, pupils' attainment in the early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 typically exceeds national figures. Leaders and governors show their determination that all pupils will achieve to the best of their ability by closely monitoring pupils' outcomes. However, in focusing on pupils' attainment, they have paid less attention to data on pupil progress which has been less strong in Key Stage 2. In particular, the proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress for their age is below the national average. The small numbers of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, and those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, typically achieve well in comparison to other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors place a high priority on keeping children safe. This is reflected in the comments of parents at the school gate and through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Year 6 pupils identify pupils' safety as a key strength of the school and express confidence that any adult in school will help them should the need arise. They take responsibility for keeping other pupils safe and show a deep sense of care and support towards each other, reflecting the school's values in their words and actions.

Leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Recording and reporting procedures are well organised and staff undertake regular training to ensure that their knowledge and practice is current. They are very aware of the risks that pupils might face, now and in the future, and show great vigilance at all times.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. They have identified relevant improvement priorities within a concise and manageable development plan. The impact of this plan can be seen by the improvements which have already taken place this term in response to a decline in pupils' attainment in mathematics in 2015. Leaders monitor the impact of school improvement activities more regularly and as a result are able to evaluate the success of actions taken more effectively. Marking and feedback to pupils provide a good example of this. After a relaunch at the start of this term, increased monitoring of the work in pupils' books has resulted in important adaptations to improve practice further. Pupils

in Years 5 and 6 are able to describe the importance of the feedback they receive and how it has improved this year. However, pupils' books show that there is still some inconsistency in marking and feedback practice. As a result, pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning.

- Governors have a very sharp understanding of their roles. They are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and use their knowledge to the benefit of the school. Governors take their responsibilities of challenging the headteacher and supporting school improvement very seriously. The committee structure is used effectively. Most decisions are delegated to committees, so that the full governing body can focus on the key issues which affect the present and future direction of the school. They have a very good understanding of how additional funding such as the pupil premium is used and can explain the positive impact this money has had on pupils' achievement. Governors understand the potential threats to pupils' safety and are increasingly aware of issues such as child exploitation and extremism.
- Leaders and governors formally review pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics each term. The more regular scrutiny of pupils' books is allowing leaders to implement change more quickly and effectively. An example of this can be seen in mathematics, where pupils' workbooks have been replaced with a different style that now supports the school's revised calculations policy more effectively. In addition, teachers are using new strategies to eliminate extensive and unnecessary repetition of calculations. Leaders see this as being particularly relevant for accelerating the progress of the most-able pupils in Key Stage 2. Further analysis is underway to ensure that pupils of all abilities have regular opportunities to practise and embed their new mathematical skills through problem solving and mathematical challenges.
- Parents I spoke with at the school gate were very positive about the speed at which the school acknowledges pupils' additional needs. They also praised the quality of support provided to pupils and the effectiveness of communication with school staff. One parent highlighted the regular monthly meetings to discuss their child's progress and believed that they 'wouldn't get service like that anywhere else'. Your unswerving commitment to every pupil ensures that no pupil is overlooked and that support is provided at an early stage. As a result, almost all pupils make at least expected progress over time. The overwhelming majority of parents who participated in the online survey were supportive of the school and its leaders.
- Pupils behave well around the school and at different times of the day. They are very willing to talk about their work and explain what they are learning. By Year 6, they are able to have very well developed conversations about what they have learned, while expressing mature and well-informed opinions. The school's values engender tolerance and respect for others and this provides a firm basis for the development of

fundamental British values. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to experience other faiths and places of worship. Pupils are well prepared for the each stage of their education as well their future life in modern Britain.

- Children enter the school at levels of development which are at least in line with that expected of children of their age. The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development exceeds the national figure. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and this results in their attainment being above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2, the vast majority of pupils make at least the progress expected for children of their age and, historically, pupil attainment has exceeded national figures over a prolonged period. However, in 2015, there was a significant fall in attainment in mathematics, which the school is now addressing. Also in 2015, a much lower proportion of pupils than the national average made more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This was particularly the case for the most-able pupils. The small number of disadvantaged pupils achieve well and many match or exceed the attainment of those who are not disadvantaged. Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities also achieve well and the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils narrows over time.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils' outcomes in mathematics are improved through:
 - consistent application of the school's marking and feedback policy
 - accelerating rates of progress in Key Stage 2, especially for the most-able pupils
 - ensuring that all pupils can apply basic skills and calculation strategies consistently, accurately and across a range of problem solving challenges.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McMullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you, the school's literacy and numeracy leaders, six governors, parents and a group of Year 6 pupils. You and I visited all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I considered responses of parents from Parent View, an additional letter from a parent, and the responses to the electronic surveys for staff and pupils. I looked at a range of documents including an evaluation of the school's performance and plans for further improvement, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs.