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23 February 2017

Mr Michael Shakespeare  
Headteacher  
Coxley Primary School  
Harter's Hill Lane  
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Dear Mr Michael Shakespeare

### **Short inspection of Coxley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 February 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since becoming headteacher in April 2016 you continue to raise expectations. Your development of the improvement plan is ensuring that staff and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to consolidate and extend good and better learning outcomes for pupils.

This is a popular school. From the outset you have gained the support of teachers and support staff, who were willing to listen and embrace the changes you introduced. You have developed a good reputation amongst parents. Those who spoke with me confirmed that communications with the school 'are effortless' and that the school is particularly experienced in providing for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As one parent who spoke with me said, 'I am very grateful to the teachers. My son has made great academic progress since starting at school.'

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils are safe in the school. A strong culture of safeguarding has been built around a secure knowledge of pupils' individual needs and any vulnerabilities they may demonstrate. Staff know the needs of pupils and their families well. They are vigilant in spotting any evidence that a child may not be thriving. You possess a very good knowledge of the pupils in your care whose circumstances make them

particularly vulnerable. The checks that are made on the staff's backgrounds and their suitability to work with children comply with legal requirements. Records show staff and governors are well informed, appropriately trained and regularly updated on changes in safeguarding legislation. The school takes appropriate action where necessary and works closely with external partners in order to help pupils to thrive as well as keep them safe. Parents who spoke with the inspector at the start of the day agreed their children were safe and well cared for while at school. A typical comment written by a parent was, 'This school is totally amazing with the amount of educational and fun ways it involves each and every child.' Another wrote, 'We cannot praise the school enough! Such a hard working team of staff make it a welcoming and productive environment for pupils to learn in.'

### **Inspection findings**

- One of my key lines of enquiry in helping me to decide whether the school remained good was to find out how well the school had addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. To this end, we reviewed pupils' written work in their books and on display around the school. We found plenty of evidence that pupils are learning to write for a range of purposes and audiences. Handwriting is taught systematically throughout the school. Pupils' work on display reflects the rich and varied curriculum. Of particular note was the work begun with a local artist and completed by pupils, to remember the soldiers who died in the first world war at the battle of the Somme.
- Staff training and development is a priority. Your initial focus on improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills quickly led to a review of policy on how teachers respond and feed back to pupils about their work. The personalised support and guidance pupils now receive from their teachers is proving to be highly effective in helping them to make good progress in their learning. Staff are working collaboratively with other schools in order to enhance their subject knowledge especially for English and mathematics. Visits to other schools of a similar size to observe best practice have also been beneficial. Professional development has made 'a huge difference to teachers' confidence', as they have gained regular input from subject specialists, participated in opportunities to share best practice and compared standards of pupils' work with other colleagues.
- Since September 2016, teachers have been able to identify with greater confidence where pupils have made much stronger progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematics skills. A change in timetable, to introduce a daily mental arithmetic slot for key stage 2 pupils, is working well. The needs of the small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities within the school are accurately identified and provided for. The close monitoring of these pupils shows they are also making good progress, relative to their varied starting points. Other key groups, such as the most able and disadvantaged pupils, are not tracked as closely.
- Another line of enquiry was how well pupils were learning to read. Children in the early years have settled well to learning and are making overall good progress in

learning to read. Those pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 have now caught up. The school is much more rigorous in monitoring pupils' acquisition of reading skills. Younger pupils are tracked individually so their teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn next or practise more. As a result, you are confident that all pupils will be successful this year in their phonics screening check. Pupils who read to the inspector did so with confidence and accuracy. The inspector was particularly impressed with those pupils in key stage 2 who read from their own published books that they had written in the past year.

- A further line of enquiry looked at how well governors are provided with sufficient, accurate and evaluative information regarding the work of the school. Your leadership demonstrates improved confidence and rigour in monitoring pupils' learning. New arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are comprehensive. They have been successfully introduced this year and are beginning to give you and the governing body a much fuller understanding of how well individual pupils are learning. Assessment information is being used to provide additional help for those who need it and this allows teachers to plan with greater accuracy for pupils' next steps in learning. However, the new arrangements have yet to be fully embedded within the school.
- Governors say they have witnessed further improvement in provision and pupils' achievement since the new headteacher took over. Governors speak regularly with pupils. They know pupils are happy to come to school. Governors have also worked alongside teachers to look at the quality of pupils' work in their books and see first-hand how teachers provide feedback. As a result of these activities and additional training, governors are asking more insightful questions of staff and thereby holding the school more robustly to account.
- Governors have full confidence in the leadership of the headteacher. He has provided them with a clear sense of direction and what needs to be done to sustain improvement. Governors' skills have broadened in the past year as new governors have been appointed. Governors are now receiving better quality information about the learning and progress of pupils in the school. The improved assessment and tracking arrangements provided by the headteacher have helped governors to see the true picture of pupils' progress and achievements. The headteacher acknowledges there is further work to do to embed assessment arrangements and in sharing more details about the progress of key groups of pupils, such as the most able and the disadvantaged.
- My final line of enquiry was about attendance. Pupils' attendance is a standing item on every school newsletter. The school works closely with external partners and providers, such as the local authority's education welfare officer. As a result, attendance overall has improved and is broadly in line with the national average. Where persistent absence remains, the school is able to demonstrate it is doing all it can to support these pupils and their families.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new assessment arrangements are embedded across the school so that teachers might target provision with greater accuracy
- reports to governors include detailed information about key groups of pupils, such as the most able and disadvantaged.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met regularly with you as part of a professional dialogue. I also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair. I held meetings with teachers and spoke informally with other members of staff. Together we undertook observations of learning in lessons. We spoke with pupils about their work and examined pupils' work, focusing on writing and presentation. I heard some children read to me. Before the inspection, I examined a variety of documents, including the school's website, published performance information and a summary of its self-evaluation. I spoke with parents at the start of the day and also took into account nine responses to the online survey, Parent View, and four replies to the staff survey.