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Mr Matthew Yandell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Yandell

Short inspection of Cossington Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 November 2013.

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 a good understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve in the school. Your plans for improvement are focused on the right priorities and are already showing signs of success. This is especially so in reading, which is rightly a focus. Children are showing that they are able to answer questions about what they have read and give reasons for their answers. They are at the early stages of being able to infer and deduct meaning from texts. You have recently introduced a new way of assessing what pupils can do in reading and teachers are using this to make sure that pupils of all abilities are challenged. You are aware that this still needs to be used consistently across the school.

You have created a school ethos that is caring and inclusive. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and speak highly of the visits that they go on and the many visitors that they have in school. Pupils told me about the charity fundraising work that they do and were proud of the money that they raise. They enjoy making use of the play equipment in the school grounds and enjoy the special achievement assemblies. They speak highly of the changes that you have made since being at the school.

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and pupils speak confidently about their work and how it can be improved. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning and their books demonstrate that they consistently make good

progress. Pupils told me that they enjoy the level of challenge that teachers provide for them.

You have correctly identified the need to work with other schools to share ideas and make improvements. You regularly work with colleagues from other schools to check on how pupils in your school are getting on and the effectiveness of the teaching. This means that you have an accurate view of how effective the school is in helping the pupils to achieve well.

Almost all of the parents and carers that I spoke to were positive about the school. A group of parents told me that they like the fact that the teachers know the children well and appreciate the many after-school activities that are available to them. They spoke positively of the weekly newsletter that they receive and the range of ways of communication that school uses, including social media. A small number of parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and how it is managed. These concerns did not match what I saw during my visit.

At the end of 2017, key stage 2 pupils reached standards in writing and mathematics that were above that found nationally. Outcomes in reading matched national figures, something that you are determined to improve on this year. A greater proportion of pupils reached the higher standards, in all subjects, than that found nationally.

Governors are passionate and highly aspirational for the pupils of the school and the outcomes that they achieve. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved and they use this to routinely challenge leaders. They regularly visit the school to see for themselves how things are improving. Governors have a good understanding of their responsibilities because their training is comprehensively planned and very well attended. Along with your deputy headteacher, you enjoy the full support of the governors and the local authority.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed.

Staff training in safeguarding is well organised and makes sure that all members of staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Governors make regular checks themselves to make sure that the school is doing everything it can to keep pupils safe. The school's records of checks on the recruitment of staff and on visitors is kept up to date.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know which adults they would speak to if they had a problem or concern. They told me about their work with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and how this has helped them understand what they can do to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

Inspection findings

- The money the school receives to help disadvantaged pupils is well spent and leaders are able to show the positive effect that this is having. These pupils get the

help that they need to make sure that they make at least good progress. Books show that they are making good, and in some cases rapid, progress.

- The recently appointed leader for disadvantaged pupils has made a positive start and is highly aspirational. She has a good understanding of her role and is targeting support for pupils effectively so that they make faster progress. She has begun to measure the success of actions regularly so that they can be changed quickly if they are not working. However, leaders recognise that this role is in its early stages and needs more time before they can evaluate how successful it is in increasing the standards that pupils reach.
- Teaching is led well. Senior leaders have a good understanding of where teaching is strong and where improvements need to be made. They have been determined to tackle any weak teaching and have been successful in doing so. Teachers know what it is that they need to improve on because the feedback that they receive is clear. However, there is no system in place to check that the required improvements are being made.
- Leaders regularly look at a wide range of information before reaching a decision about how effective teaching is. They look at books, talk to pupils and look at assessment information. This means that judgements are robust and accurate.
- Teachers make sure that children are challenged well during lessons. Pupils told me, 'We like being challenged because it helps us to get better at things.' However, leaders know that there are still some instances where children are being asked to do work that is too easy for them before moving on to more challenging tasks.
- The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and matches what leaders say. Leaders are determined to make sure that teaching is the best that it can be.
- You are aware of the decline in outcomes at the end of the early years and have taken effective steps to address this. You have very recently appointed a new early years leader who has made a positive start. You are providing effective support to make sure that the assessments of what children can do are accurate and based on a wide range of information. Children in the early years are now being suitably challenged and are making good progress. Evidence in books shows that rapid progress is being made in writing. Children are eager to write and share what they have written. They are proud of their achievements.
- Children in the early years are actively engaged in learning and enjoy their time at school. They were eager to tell me about their 'inspiration day' where they dressed up as people who help them. I saw them acting some of this out in their play as three boys dressed as police officers and went to offer help to others in the class. Relationships are positive and children engage with a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors.
- You have identified the need to address the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. You recognised that although the school's overall attendance rate was higher than that found nationally in 2017, the number of pupils who were persistently absent dramatically increased. You have put in place a new attendance policy to help address this and this is already having a positive impact. We looked at a small group of pupils whose attendance has improved as a result of the new policy.

Staff and parents have a clearer understanding of how important attendance is and how absence will be tackled. More importantly, the new policy makes sure that you work with parents to identify and overcome any barriers to school attendance.

- You make regular checks to see which pupils' absence is causing concern. However, you do not routinely check on the absence of different groups of pupils to make sure that none are disadvantaged by absence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress in reading increases by:
 - improving pupils' responses when they are answering questions about the texts they are reading
 - making full and effective use of the new assessment procedure
- leadership and management are strengthened by:
 - routinely checking that aspects of teaching that need improvement have been addressed
 - developing the leadership roles of those responsible for the early years and disadvantaged pupils
- checks are routinely made on the absence of different groups of pupils so that none are disadvantaged by poor school attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you; we shared the school's self-evaluation and my key lines of enquiry. We also met to talk about absence, safeguarding, the leading of teaching and the early years. I also met with the lead for pupil premium and a group of governors. I had discussions with pupils, hearing them read, and parents at the start of the school day. I considered the responses of parents made to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the views of staff and pupils. I observed playtime and we visited all classes in the school together, spending a short time in each. We looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I viewed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the single central record, governor documentation, monitoring logs and absence information.