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Mrs Philippa Plant  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Plant

### **Short inspection of Somerby Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 March 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up your appointment in September 2015, you have been steadfast in pursuing your vision for the school. Under your capable and skilled leadership, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You have raised expectations and created a dedicated team of staff who share your ambition and drive to achieve high standards across the school.

You are clear about the school's strengths and areas where further improvements are required. Your improvement plan is precise and manageable and is designed to ensure that the school continues to improve.

The governing body is a dedicated group that knows the school well. Governors work effectively with senior leaders to identify priorities for improvement. They have the skills necessary to hold leaders to account and ensure that good outcomes for pupils are maintained. Governors welcome the high-quality support and training they receive from the academy trust.

Since your appointment, you have taken action to raise achievement where it is weakest. You have ensured that your staff have received high-quality professional development to enhance the quality of teaching, which is rapidly improving. You have introduced a school assessment and tracking system for measuring the progress and attainment of pupils. Teachers, leaders and governors now have

accurate and reliable information on the amount of progress pupils make. You meticulously analyse this information and compare it to national expectations. This is then used to identify any additional support that may be needed for pupils to achieve the targets they are set. A notable example of the impact of your actions can be seen in the increased number of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening checks in 2016. You have also reviewed and revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn about a broad range of different subjects.

Somerby is a caring and welcoming school. Pupils in the school greeted me warmly and were polite. They listen respectfully to adults, follow school rules and work well together. Pupils I spoke with were articulate and confident. They told me how proud they are to be part of this small community and how much they enjoy and appreciate the provision you and your staff make for them. Parents and carers, together with staff, express high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's effectiveness.

You acknowledge that the school is not yet outstanding. You recognise that some pupils need to be challenged more to reach the higher standards they are capable of. You are also aware that the improvements made in the early years need to be sustained if attainment levels are to continue to rise. Finally, you agree that you have not yet developed a system for monitoring and tracking the progress pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is given the highest priority at Somerby Primary School. The administration of safeguarding and safety-related matters is robust. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The staff are kept up to date about safeguarding issues and have a clear understanding of how to deal with any concerns. Staff know all the pupils in the school well.

Pupils who I spoke with during the inspection told me how safe they feel and how they know that adults are always looking out for them. The school's curriculum helps pupils to develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Parents who responded to the school's own parental surveys said that their children are happy and safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and the governors have acted swiftly to tackle the decline in last year's outcomes in the early years. The vast majority of children join the Reception Year with skills well below those typical for their age. The creation of an additional class has allowed adults to provide an array of resources and teaching approaches more suited to early learning. The learning environment is carefully organised, both indoors and outdoors, with a range of activities that excite the children and capture their imagination. Individual children receive targeted support when it is needed. The school's assessment system and work in the

children's books show that children make good progress in their Reception Year from their various starting points. In particular, boys are now making better progress than in the past. Currently, more of the children in the early years are on track to achieve a good level of development than in previous years. However, opportunities to reinforce skills, especially in communication and numeracy, are not yet routinely built into daily activities.

- You have raised expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan for pupils' needs and teachers and teaching assistants alike use questioning to good effect to make pupils think more deeply and increase their understanding. This ensures that pupils are increasingly challenged to reach higher standards in their work. The school's tracking system indicates that increased numbers of pupils currently in the school are making more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders acknowledge, however, that this is not yet the case for all pupils. Some groups of pupils are not consistently challenged and do not reach the high standards they should.
- Leaders have strengthened the provision for disadvantaged pupils. The disadvantaged pupils I spoke with during the inspection told me that they feel well supported. The schools' assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are making progress that is at least as fast as, and often faster than, others in the school. Currently, most disadvantaged pupils are expected to reach age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy a curriculum which is planned around topics and themes which motivate and inspire them. The curriculum structure creates opportunities for pupils to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding through cross-curricular learning. Pupils' workbooks seen during the inspection showed that pupils are making good progress across a range of different subjects. However, in 2016, outcomes in science at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 were below the national averages. Leaders recognise that they do not have an adequate understanding of the progress pupils make in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. Therefore, they are not able to provide the additional support or challenge that pupils may require.
- Pupils' experiences are enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and trips and participation in events and competitions with other schools. Pupils are also able to take on positions of responsibility, which they do with purpose and great enjoyment.
- Although a very small number of pupils do not attend as well as they should, overall rates of attendance are high. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely and follow up absences swiftly. They work hard to reduce the number of absences of individual pupils and this has been particularly successful for disadvantaged pupils. The pupils I spoke with during the inspection told me that they want to attend because they enjoy being at school.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children's progress continues to accelerate so that a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year
- teachers provide pupils with work that consistently challenges them and ensures that more pupils achieve a greater depth to their learning
- focused monitoring and evaluation activities provide leaders with a firm understanding of the progress pupils make in a range of different 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 Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, members of the governing body and a representative of the academy trust. You and I visited each of the classes. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. I spoke with a group of pupils and I listened to pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading. In addition, I considered a broad range of documents, including attendance records and information on pupils' attainment and progress. Safeguarding practices were also reviewed. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I also considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey and the views of parents replying to the school's own parental surveys. There were insufficient responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) to comment on.