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12 January 2017

Mrs Susan Hall  
Headteacher  
Lemington Riverside Primary School  
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NE15 8RR

Dear Mrs Hall

### **Short inspection of Lemington Riverside Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 2016, 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 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are ambitious for the pupils, their families and the community. All staff follow your determined lead. They want pupils to achieve the very best outcomes and to leave Lemington Riverside well equipped to succeed in the next stage of their education.

Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and honest. Areas for further improvement are clearly identified and based on sound evidence.

Members of the governing body are highly skilled and well trained. Consequently, they are effective in questioning leaders and holding them to account for the school's performance. Governors have a comprehensive knowledge of pupils' assessment information and prioritise accurately the school's current areas for development. One governor identified 'attendance, attendance, attendance' as a key priority, followed by increasing parents' engagement with the school, and then raising further the achievement of specific groups of pupils such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teaching ensures that most pupils, from their starting points, make good progress. Teachers are supported extremely well by highly trained teaching assistants. For example, a teaching assistant encouraged a child to recall three alternative ways to spell a sound to help the child to write the word 'ate' correctly.

At the last inspection, you were asked to focus on continuing to raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, extending the school's promotion of community cohesion and improving pupils' attendance. Attainment in English and mathematics has increased substantially since the last inspection in all key stages. Community cohesion is now a strength of the school. It is promoted well through visits to and from the local community and through the pen pal links in key stage 2. Attendance has improved from 94.7% in 2010 to 96.1% in 2016. Hence, it is now in line with the national average. However, pupils' persistent absence is a continuing cause for concern.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding continues to be of high priority and is effective. The school's single central record of recruitment checks is fully compliant with requirements.

You have a deep knowledge of individual pupils, their families and the local community. Your highly trained staff ensure that pupils' emotional needs are met during times of crisis. Pupils feel safe and are safe in school. For some, school is their prime place of safety. You have welcomed 'Operation Encompass', a Northumbria Police initiative to safeguard and support children who are involved in, or affected by, incidents of domestic violence.

Staff and governors undertake safeguarding training, including training on keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism, and receive regular updates. Safeguarding records are comprehensive and kept securely online. However, you do not provide governors regularly with enough information about the number and types of incidents that occur in school. For example, governors are not aware of incidents of homophobic name-calling in school. This means that governors are unable to fulfil their support-and-challenge role sufficiently well.

### **Inspection findings**

- Attendance is improving over time. Leaders, wisely, have employed a part-time family support officer (FSO) in order to improve attendance further and reduce persistent absenteeism substantially. The FSO's work is having a very beneficial impact on attendance. For example, the FSO visits the homes of pupils whose parents have not provided an explanation for the absence on the pupil's first day away from school. Despite this work, too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Pupils have bought into attending school. You sought and obtained sponsorship recently for an attendance initiative reward. Pupils appreciate the weekly 100% attendance draw and are eager for their name to be drawn so that they receive the £5 voucher.
- Pupils' attainment improved greatly in 2016 following a dip in standards in 2015. However, you recognise that the most able disadvantaged pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable because the work that is planned for them sometimes lacks appropriate challenge. This is a key area for improvement

and, in some classes, the actions that you have taken so far are beginning to bear fruit. However, not all teachers plan activities to really stretch the most able disadvantaged pupils to enable them to achieve greater depth and the very highest standards.

- Similarly, you recognise that not all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good enough progress. Your thorough analysis has highlighted that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities whose parents work cooperatively with the school make better progress than those whose parents are less actively involved.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard in the Year 1 screening check has regularly been above average over time. Lower-ability pupils use the phonic strategies they have been taught well to read unknown words. Higher-ability pupils read with confidence and fluency. They use their skills to deduce meanings from the text. These pupils are developing a real love of reading.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. You have ensured that pupils engage with local, national and international communities. Pupils learn about right and wrong through attending the weekly 'fish' club, which is facilitated in school by volunteers from your local church. Pupils' sense of social responsibility increases through their involvement with charities such as the People's Kitchen in Newcastle. Older pupils learn about international communities through their correspondence with pen pals in other countries. You raise your pupils' aspirations through educational visits to venues such as Newcastle University.
- Pupils make effective progress in reading, writing and mathematics because of the emphasis, led by you, on their acquisition of basic skills. This starts as soon as children join the school in the Nursery class. They settle quickly into the routines of the early years provision and quickly learn to concentrate for short periods of time on numbers, sounds and early writing. Teachers and teaching assistants in the early years make the most of every opportunity to develop further children's communication skills.
- Adults' assessment of children's skills, abilities and progress is a strength of the early years. Leaders recognise that children make better progress when their parents contribute to their child's online assessment record.
- You recognise that middle leadership requires further development. Middle leaders do not have a firm grasp on the progress made by groups of pupils in the subjects they lead. Not all have had an opportunity to check on teaching, learning and assessment since the beginning of the current academic year. However, when they do have the opportunity to check on progress, they are adept at picking up areas for development. For example, the subject leader for mathematics recently identified, from a check of pupils' workbooks, that some of the most able disadvantaged pupils are not stretched sufficiently in her subject.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and during less-structured times of the school day. These pupils are polite, confident and inquisitive. They

treat adults with courtesy and respect. Leaders are supporting effectively a very small number of older pupils exhibiting poor behaviour, who were recently admitted to the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders address pupils' absence relentlessly, liaise with the local authority effectively and take full advantage of the authority's resources and powers to address persistent absenteeism robustly
- teachers provide work routinely for the most able disadvantaged pupils which enables them to reach a greater depth in their learning
- governors receive information regularly about the number and types of safeguarding and behaviour incidents that occur in school so that they can identify trends and challenge leaders effectively to make improvements
- leaders ensure that there are increased opportunities for parents to work in partnership with the school to help their children make better progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Belita Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I focused on the following key lines of enquiry during the inspection:

- Is safeguarding effective?
- Is pupils' attendance good?
- Does the school meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Have leaders ensured that the curriculum is fit for purpose?
- Does provision in the early years meet the needs of the children?

I discussed the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher, the leader of the early years, subject leaders and six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I checked a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I examined information about pupils' achievement together with external evaluations of aspects of the school's work and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I considered 25 responses to the school's most recent parent survey as there were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) to register. I considered four responses to

Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Alongside senior leaders, I visited all classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment. I checked the progress made by pupils in their workbooks, talked formally to a group of six pupils and talked more informally to pupils in lessons and at breaktime about their learning. I also listened to pupils from Years 1, 3 and 6 read.