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28 December 2017

Mrs Susan Sharpe  
Lynnfield Primary School  
Grosvenor Street  
Hartlepool  
TS26 8RL

Dear Mrs Sharpe

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lynnfield Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection I held meetings with you, senior and middle leaders and two representatives of the governing body. I also met with Hartlepool local authority's assistant director for education. The aim of the meetings was to determine the effect of actions taken since the previous inspection. I visited a number of classes with you, observing learning and reviewing pupils' work. I spoke to pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, pupils' progress and attendance information and minutes of recent governing body meetings.

### **Context**

There have been a number of changes in the school since the last inspection. The headteacher retired shortly after the inspection and an interim headteacher, a

headteacher from a local school, provided temporary leadership until July 2017. You were appointed as headteacher in March 2017 and took up your post formally in September. You worked with the interim headteacher during the summer term. Two teachers left the school at the end of July and a number of teaching assistants have been appointed. You have reorganised the school buildings to make use of unused parts of the children's centre and to provide an accessible entrance into the school.

## **Main findings**

Strong transition arrangements between the interim headteacher and yourself during the summer of 2017 have ensured that improvements begun following the previous inspection are continuing and gathering pace. You have energised other leaders, staff and governors in your vision that only the best is good enough for the pupils in Lynnfield; consequently, morale is high. You have systematically reviewed what is working well and what needs to improve further, including the areas that required improvement at the time of the last inspection. Detailed action plans are being implemented to address weaknesses. Actions are checked regularly by you, other leaders and governors to make sure that they are making a positive difference to your journey to become a good school. Governors are aware that the plan does not have many measurable targets against which they can measure the effect of the school's work on pupils' progress and attendance, and you are taking action to remedy this.

You and the interim headteacher recognised that the main barrier to the school's success was the quality of teaching. Through training of staff, sharing good practice and rigorous arrangements to manage teachers' performance, you have eradicated weaker teaching and are continuing to increase the proportion of good teaching across the school. Improvements in the quality of teaching have had a demonstrable effect on the attainment and progress of pupils in the summer of 2017, and in the progress pupils are currently making in their learning. Higher proportions of key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils reached the expected standards in their summer 2017 assessments. You know that more needs to be done to increase the proportion of pupils achieving highly, and plans are already being implemented to address this.

You have invested heavily in improving the quality of the school environment, reorganising classrooms and utilising spaces available in the previous children's centre. This work, together with redecoration and the provision of high-quality furniture and resources for pupils and staff, provides a warm welcome to all who enter Lynnfield. Actions have given teachers more tools to do their job and increased pupils' respect for and enjoyment of school. Older pupils report very positively about the changes you have made and how much nicer school is now.

Middle and senior leaders welcome your work to develop their roles and increase their areas of responsibility in helping to improve the school's effectiveness. Opportunities for them to visit outstanding practice in other schools and share the

good practice in school are contributing to the improvements in subject leadership and in the quality of teaching across the school. These leaders are working with you to make sure that teachers use the information from their regular assessments of pupils' learning to plan work for pupils that meets their needs and helps them move on well from what they know and already understand. You know that there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils are challenged sufficiently in lessons. There are still occasions when the most able are provided with work that is too easy, and lower-ability pupils are given work that is beyond their current levels of understanding.

More regular checks on pupils' learning are making sure that any pupil at risk of falling behind is given extra support to catch up to where they should be. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors now receive very detailed reports on pupils' progress across the school and the progress of different groups. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement because of these detailed reports and their regular visits to school. They support and challenge you effectively to make sure that you and your team are making a positive difference to the life-chances of all pupils in Lynnfield.

Assessment systems are being developed for subjects other than English and mathematics, but it is still too soon to see the effect of this work. However, new topics have been thought out well to energise, interest and involve pupils in their learning. Staff and pupils report how improvements to the atmosphere in school and changes to the rewards-based behaviour policy, and its more consistent application, are improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well and apply themselves quickly to their tasks in lessons. They are polite, friendly, enthusiastic and keen to do well. Pupils' increasing enjoyment of school can be seen in the improvements to their attendance rates this term. Rates have also improved because of the changes you have made in the way that you track pupils' attendance daily and identify any pupil at risk of not attending regularly. The parent support adviser and assistant headteacher work together to challenge or support parents and carers to help their children get to school on time and regularly.

### **External support**

You have valued the effective support from the local authority specialist adviser for English and mathematics to help improve the leadership of these subjects. You have also recognised the effectiveness of the regular meetings held with officers from the local authority, leaders and governors to make sure that you are keeping on track with the improvements needed to improve the school. Importantly, you have drawn on expertise from leaders from local schools and beyond to improve the quality of teaching and learning and subject leadership.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hartlepool. This letter will

be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**