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Nigel Fowler  
Lyndhurst Primary and Nursery School  
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Greater Manchester  
OL8 4JD

Dear Nigel Fowler

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Lyndhurst Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit with Catherine Parkinson, Ofsted Inspector, to the school on 15 and 16 March 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement that were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint up to two newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Oldham Metropolitan

Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2015**

- Take urgent steps to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that it is at least good, in order to raise standards for all groups of pupils in these year groups, so that they can make good or better progress, by ensuring that:
  - teachers' knowledge and skills to teach reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 6 are good enough to enable all groups of pupils to achieve well
  - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including of their handwriting and presentation of work
  - teachers set challenging and appropriate targets for pupils of all groups and, particularly boys, the disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs
  - the most able pupils are fully challenged to think hard and achieve their best
  - assessment information is accurate and used effectively to accelerate pupils' learning in all subjects
  - pupils' work is regularly marked and that marking consistently provides useful guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and that this advice is acted upon
  - pupils' numeracy skills provide a secure base for further learning and providing opportunities for them to apply these skills in subjects in other than mathematics
  - standards in reading are raised by strengthening younger pupils' knowledge of phonics and increasing opportunities for pupils of all ages to read more widely
  - pupils have more opportunities to improve and extend their writing skills across a range of subjects, as well as in literacy lessons.
- Rapidly improve pupils' behaviour and safety, particularly in Years 5 and 6, so that they are at least good, by ensuring that:
  - leaders take effective action to tackle incidents of bullying, poor behaviour and disrespect
  - all staff and pupils follow the school's new behaviour policy and staff have the skills to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
  - teachers consistently support and challenge all pupils to develop good attitudes to learning and respect for others
  - the curriculum is strengthened so that pupils have a good understanding

- of how to deal with bullying
  - the methods for recording and following up behaviour and safety incidents in order to prevent reoccurrence are strengthened.
- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, so there is a strong and collective capacity to quickly improve the effectiveness of the school by ensuring that:
- the achievement of different groups of pupils is regularly checked in order to put action in place more swiftly if underachievement is identified
  - clear, measurable steps in improvement plans show how well the school is progressing
  - the appraisal of teachers' performance is regularly reviewed and that they are held rigorously to account for pupils' progress
  - subject leaders' skills are developed so they are effective in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects
  - governors effectively hold the school to account for its performance and play a full part in monitoring the expenditure of the pupil premium and primary school physical education and sports funding.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 15 and 16 March 2016**

### **Evidence**

At the previous inspection, inspectors focused on what the school had done to improve pupils' behaviour. This inspection looked in detail at improvements that have been made to teaching, particularly in mathematics, and to leadership and management, particularly at the middle leadership level.

Inspectors observed teaching in every class and across a range of subjects; five of the observations were with the deputy and assistant headteachers. Inspectors also observed learning support assistants teaching small groups of pupils. They looked through pupils' books with a particular focus on the most able and the pupils identified as having special educational needs. They spoke with some parents at the start of the day, observed an assembly and looked through a range of documents including the school's plans for improvement and senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.

Inspectors met with members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. They also met three groups of pupils.

### **Context**

One of the deputy headteachers and a teacher have been absent due to long-term illness since January 2016. Two new teachers began working at the school in January after the resignation of two existing teachers.

Plans for the school to become an academy are well advanced; the forecast date for transition to becoming a new school is July 2016.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Lyndhurst, after a year in special measures, is now a different school. The main reason for this is the determined and effective leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors. They have acted on, and successfully tackled, most of the points for improvement identified at the last full inspection as well as those that Her Majesty's Inspector provided at the last monitoring inspection.

Action plans are highly focused and effective in bringing about improvements. Pupils' behaviour has significantly improved so that the school and classrooms are almost entirely orderly. Pupils' outcomes have improved in the early years and across the school in mathematics. The most-able pupils are challenged and are quickly gathering depth of knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. Senior leaders have the approval of most parents and pupils who recognise, and are grateful for, the changes to the school and in particular, to

pupils' behaviour.

Senior leaders have an accurate judgement about the strengths of teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes. They frequently check on the quality of teaching through looking at pupils' work, observing lessons, speaking with pupils and through holding progress meetings with staff. These checks are a significant improvement on the last full inspection and allow leaders to quickly identify and support pupils who are in danger of falling behind.

Middle leaders are the teachers who lead subjects or lead provision in a number of year groups, such as the early years, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. They have become more involved in checking on the quality of teaching and how well teachers apply school policies, for example the policy for classroom displays, presentation of work and for giving feedback, including marking, to pupils. The leaders are now at the stage where they should have greater focus on providing teachers in their teams with more precise feedback about the quality of teaching in each subject, not just English and mathematics.

Inspectors had concerns, in this inspection, about the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The teacher who started to lead on this aspect of the school's work only started in January 2016 but already has a clear and high-quality plan to swiftly bring about improvements. This aspect of the school's work should be leaders' next priority for improvement.

Since the last full inspection there has been a significant improvement in governors' oversight and understanding of the outcomes of different groups of pupils. Similarly, they have a greater understanding of the quality of teaching in each class and of the impact of external funding such as the pupil premium. There is greater accountability and shared responsibility across the school. Middle leaders present their action plans in governing body meetings so that governors can provide additional support and challenge. Governors have high expectations and are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They have successfully gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff and have acted on the findings. One of those findings, regarding the poor quality of the website, has also been picked up by inspectors. The school should now work on the contents of the website to make sure it, and the policies, are fully compliant with government information regulations.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching in mathematics has improved significantly, in part, because of the high quality input from external specialist consultants. Teachers across the school have higher expectations of pupils who frequently have to explain their answers, describe their methods, convince others about their thinking or prove their answers are correct. As a result, pupils' ability to reason mathematically has improved significantly.

There is a far greater focus on problem solving. In the early years, for example, children worked on their number bonds to 20 by systematically working out in a car park with 20 spaces how many spaces would be filled and vacant if one car parked, then two cars, then three cars and so on. This not only developed children's ability to solve problems but also to gain fluency with numbers. Across the school, pupils are now engaged in activities that develop their problem solving and thinking skills.

Pupils spoke highly about 'mad minutes' which was introduced in January. It has improved pupils' quick recall of number facts and has introduced a degree of competition in which pupils try to improve their scores. Another consequence of this way of working has been to plug the gaps in pupils' learning resulting from previously weak teaching.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have increased significantly since the full inspection. This is particularly evident in the classes where there is a permanent teacher. In particular, the most-able pupils are making much better progress in English and mathematics. They are asked to think harder and to use and apply correct technical vocabulary such as prepositional phrase, expanded noun phrase and subordinate clauses.

Provision for pupils who have special educational needs was a point for improvement following the full inspection. This remains an issue. This group of pupils are taught more by teaching assistants than other groups of pupils and therefore have less time with the qualified teachers. Their work is sometimes far too easy or they are too reliant on adults to do the work for them. Some of the teaching assistants who work with this group of pupils do not use questions to the best effect or to extend pupils' knowledge or thinking. Too often, this group of pupils work outside the class without enough monitoring by the teacher. There are many teaching assistants but not all provide best value. In contrast, other teaching assistants use their questioning and teaching skills to the best effect, enabling pupils to catch up to their peers or to make good progress in their work but also in their behaviour and attitudes.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Inspectors spent less time on this aspect because it was the main focus at the last monitoring inspection. In almost every class, during this inspection, pupils responded well to the teacher's requests and were keen, polite and friendly. Almost every teacher applied the 'language of choice' strategy used by the school and consistently applied the behaviour policy and agreed principles. However, some teaching assistants, outside of the class, did not model the good manners or language that is expected of teachers by the school.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

In the early years, children's outcomes are improving. The proportion of pupils predicted to get a good level of development is expected to be higher than in 2015 and higher than the national average in 2015. Children's books indicate they are making good progress in the Reception Year in their reading, writing and in their number. During the inspection, pupils could confidently count with the teacher to 100 in ones, to 100 in tens and back from 100 in tens and solve a range of problems.

Across the school, pupils are making improved progress in mathematics. Their work shows they have more fluency in using and applying numbers in problems. Their work also shows calculations in which they have to think and explain their answers. Pupils in Year 6 had to think deeply about how they could create a character for 'Minecraft' using five different monetary units within an overall budget. I spoke with a group of able mathematicians from Years 5 and 6 who could nimbly and accurately calculate mentally a range of complex questions relating to fractions such as 25 fifths subtract a quarter.

Although pupils' attainment and progress is improving well in English and mathematics, their progress in subjects such as science, history and geography is much weaker. For example, their writing and data handling skills are not replicated in their work in other subjects. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work in some classes shows that there is little development of good scientific skills, or skills relating to history or geography.

Pupils who have special educational needs make mixed progress. In some classes, their work shows that they make good progress, particularly in reading and writing, building on their sentence structures to write ever more complex pieces of work. However in a few classes, this group of pupils do not achieve well enough. Their work remains at a similar level since October 2015 and the work is not challenging enough.

## **External support**

Valuable external support from the local authority has enabled senior leaders to focus on improvements to teaching while it negotiates the transition to becoming an academy. This transition involves overcoming highly complex issues surrounding the building and the land but discussions are at an advanced stage. Weekly visits from the behaviour support team have continued and there is an impact on pupils' continually improving behaviour and attitudes.

The external reviews and joint working with other schools such as St Anne's CE Primary School and Old Trafford Community School have been effective in helping leaders to check the accuracy of their judgements.



The external support, from mathematics specialist consultants, has been highly effective in improving teaching.