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Mrs Juliette Westwood  
Executive Headteacher  
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Warwickshire  
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Dear Mrs Westwood

### **Short inspection of Lighthorne Heath Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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 school was judged to be good in September 2012.

#### **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 high expectations of pupils and staff and they rise to the challenge. Staff are proud to work at Lighthorne Heath and pupils enjoy school. You know the school well, including its many strengths and few weaknesses. Ably supported by senior and middle leaders, you tackle weaknesses quickly and rigorously. Your clear and strong leadership is ensuring that the school continues to improve. All staff who responded to the online inspection questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed. Morale is very high.

Lighthorne Heath is a friendly, welcoming and caring school where pupils become confident learners. You provide high-quality support for any pupil who needs extra help and this often extends to supporting their families also. All parents that I spoke to, or who wrote to me, were fulsome in their praise of the school. In particular, they praised the support that adults give to their children. One parent wrote, 'I feel this school has been amazing with supporting my child's needs. Communication between myself, his class teacher and SENCo is fantastic.' Another parent wrote, 'My children are receiving a very good education. I would highly recommend this school.'

Pupils are courteous, polite and proud of their school. Many are confident and

articulate. Several were very keen to tell me how much they like their teachers because they are friendly and helpful, and they make learning interesting and enjoyable.

At the school's previous inspection, leaders were tasked with further improving the quality of teaching across the school. You have successfully maintained an effective standard of teaching in all years, despite having had to manage several long-term teacher absences. You have done this by training and developing teachers and bringing into the school external expertise when it is needed. All staff who responded to the online inspection questionnaire said they feel well supported and that they value your use of professional development to support their teaching. Teaching is now generally strong across the school, although you recognise that there is still room for further improvement, especially in the teaching of writing in key stages 1 and 2. The teaching of reading and mathematics is of a consistently high standard.

Governors provide you with effective support, although they have not kept fully up to date with some recent changes to the requirements placed on governing bodies.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have established and maintained a strong culture of making sure that pupils are safe and well cared for. The school has several vulnerable pupils. You give them, and their families, high-quality support. Because you successfully meet these pupils' social and emotional needs, they make good academic progress.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, well organised, of high quality and stored securely. You have detailed policies and procedures in place that are well understood by all staff. You regularly train and update staff. Consequently, they are confident in passing on any concerns they might have.

All parents that I spoke to said that their children feel safe in school. All pupils that I spoke to also said they feel safe in school. They told me that bullying is rare and that they trust their teachers, and other adults in school, to deal with any that does happen. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, several pupils told me of the work they had done about e-safety and they explained how they make sure they are safe when they use the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- Over recent years, standards have been high in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. However, standards in writing have lagged behind and you recognise this as the school's key area for improvement. You have put in place several strategies to improve pupils' writing. These include regular extended writing tasks and encouraging pupils to write more creatively. Additionally, this year has seen a focus on improving pupils' handwriting. Inspection evidence confirms that these strategies are beginning to yield results. I saw several

examples of pupils' books where their handwriting had improved considerably and where pupils were writing with greater confidence and at greater length. However, there remains more work to be done until pupils' confidence in writing matches that in reading and mathematics.

- Pupils make good progress during key stage 1. All pupils reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2 in 2016. However, the number reaching 'greater depth' was a little lower than it ought to have been because of some variability in the quality of teaching over the previous year. Teaching is now strong in key stage 1 and levels of challenge are high. Tasks are well matched to pupils' ability and teachers use questions skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding of their work. For example, I observed a teacher using a pupil's piece of high-quality work to model effective writing to the rest of the class. Pupils responded maturely, gained ideas for their work and were able to suggest further improvements to the writing.
- The early years setting is well organised and provides a rich and stimulating environment for children. The outdoor area is particularly well used. Children behave well, share sensibly and show consideration for each other. Teaching is strong in the early years. Assessment is regular and accurate. Children's learning journals and work books are well organised and contain clear next steps for learning. Next steps are used well to plan each child's learning activities. For example, I observed two children whose mathematics next steps were about using numbers between 10 and 20. Each was completing calculations, such as  $9+5$ , using counters and number lines. They did so with increasing confidence.
- The school federated with Sydenham Primary School in September 2010 to form the Leamington Federation. The two schools work closely together, sharing several members of staff and a single governing body. The federation brings many benefits to Lighthorne Heath and has been a key reason for its continued improvement since the previous inspection. The federation has provided high-quality senior and middle leadership and effective governance. It has provided support with staffing and many opportunities for pupils that they would otherwise not have had. For example, pupils in Year 6 told me how much they had enjoyed a recent residential visit that included pupils from both schools.
- Governors know the school well. They are fully committed to its vision of providing the best possible education for its pupils. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders and they assure themselves that leaders are tackling weaknesses in teaching or outcomes rigorously. They carry out their statutory duties diligently. However, governors have failed to ensure that they keep up to date with some recent changes in those duties. For example, although governors have ensured that the school publishes a pupil premium report, they have not ensured that it complies with the government's requirements of such reports from September 2016. Similarly, although governors have ensured that details of the governing body's structure are on the school website, until very recently they had not added details of governors' business and financial interests. In both of these cases, governors were not aware that the requirements placed on governing bodies had changed.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' writing continues to improve so that it matches the high standards evident in their reading and mathematics
- governors keep themselves up to date with any changes that the government makes to the requirements placed on governing bodies.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, your senior leaders and other members of staff who have leadership responsibilities. I visited several classes during the day, accompanied by you or other members of staff. Here, we observed teaching and learning and we spoke with pupils about their work. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with many pupils in lessons, at breaktime and lunchtime. I met with two governors, including the chair of governors. I scrutinised several documents including your self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding and child-protection records. I considered 11 responses from members of staff to the online inspection questionnaire and four letters that parents wrote to me. Although there were insufficient responses to Parent View to see the results, I did consider five 'free-text' responses that parents made.