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Mrs Andrea Holt  
Sharneyford Primary School  
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Lancashire  
OL13 9UQ

Dear Mrs Holt

### **Short inspection of Sharneyford Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 June 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 April 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You took over the leadership of the school on the day of the last inspection. Since then, you have wasted no time in addressing the areas identified for improvement. You are committed to the success of this school, to its staff, pupils, parents and the school community. You provide strong and effective leadership and a clear vision for continued improvement. Staff, governors and parents have great confidence and trust in your leadership. You have successfully created a warm, friendly and caring school ethos. Pupils are keen to learn, and speak with great enthusiasm about their teachers. Staff enjoy working at the school. They particularly value the way in which families are at the heart of all you do. The parents are happy with the work the school does and recognise all the benefits that this school offers for their children.

Your honest and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses provides a clear rationale for improvement. You know your school well and use a range of monitoring information to ensure that you are continuing to move the school forward. As a result, the areas I identified prior to the inspection are also the key areas for improvement that you are working on. You can show where your work has had impact. For example, in 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test was lower than national. You reviewed the teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation, improving staff knowledge and expertise and ensuring that regular assessments inform teaching. You also introduced a new spelling programme. This has had a

positive impact on outcomes across all year groups in school. School data shows that an increased proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected and high standard.

Governors play a key role in supporting the work you do. They are ambitious for the school to succeed and proud of the progress that pupils make. Governors speak passionately about the ethos of the school, particularly how it plays a key role within the local community. Through relevant training they are well equipped in a range of areas to effectively challenge and support the school's work. Governing body minutes show a good degree of challenge through pertinent questions about the progress that pupils are making.

Your pupils enjoy coming to school. Their conduct is excellent, due to the strong relationships that they have with the adults in the school and they are a delight to talk to. Sharneyford is a small school, and you ensure that this benefits the pupils in your care by making sure that the needs of individual pupils are met and that they participate in a wide range of high-quality learning opportunities. In fact, parents praise 'the unique and cohesive small schooling environment' and pupils interviewed said that there were no disadvantages to being part of a small school, only advantages in 'the strong bonds formed between older and younger children'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Keeping pupils safe is a priority at this school. You are proactive in ensuring a strong culture of vigilance in relation to safeguarding. Policies and procedures are in place and regularly updated. Records show that suitable action is taken to keep pupils safe. Training is up to date for all adults who work in the school. All staff and governors are aware of the different types of abuse and the signs to look for.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe, and they talk confidently about road safety, e-safety and 'stranger danger'. Pupils know they can speak to staff if they have any concerns. Pupils know about different types of bullying. They say that bullying rarely happens and if it does then adults deal with it swiftly. As a result, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and say that they feel safe.

Parents are very pleased with the school, they say that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school, staff are approachable, there is good communication and any issues or concerns are dealt with promptly.

### **Inspection findings**

- Given the mixed-age classes in your small school, I wanted to find out how well the Reception and key stage 1 children are taught together. I found that as a result of high-quality teaching and good organisation, children get off to a good start in Reception. The learning environment is bright and stimulating, with interesting challenges for children to access in each area. Parents spoke of how good communication was with staff in early years and how well their children were progressing. Teaching time is divided effectively between the Reception children and the key stage 1 pupils. Teaching input is followed up with engaging

and challenging activities which are well supported by the teaching assistants. For example, pupils in key stage 1 were learning a strategy for estimating, and the work was well matched to the differing needs of the pupils. From low starting points on entry to school, children make good progress through the early years and through key stage 1. In 2016 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national average. Current school data indicates that this good level of progress has been sustained.

- I also wanted to know what you are doing to improve mathematics so that more pupils attain the expected standard. You had already identified this as an area for improvement and put in place a range of strategies to support the development of mathematics. You and your mathematics leader have monitored these strategies and they have shown improved progress for all year groups. The sample of work seen in mathematics books shows that there is a greater focus on applying skills to solve problems, which is helping to deepen thinking. Pupils work together to tackle problems, which allows them to develop more confidence and to explain their thinking. However, some pupils are not as fluent in basic number facts and this hinders their ability to work out harder calculations. Improvements in the school tracking system mean you can see precisely which pupils are on track to make expected progress and know where to put additional support. Current progress information shows that the proportion of pupils on track to reach the expected standard is in line with last year's national average and the proportion expected to attain the high standard has increased. You are aware, however, that this work is relatively new and needs to be embedded securely across the school.
- As a result of the work the school has done, you have sustained improvements to writing since the previous inspection. You have invested in professional development opportunities for all staff, which has led to improved subject knowledge, with positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, strong teacher subject knowledge was skilfully used to support pupils of all abilities to edit and refine their writing of a diary entry. You and your teachers work together with local schools to check the accuracy of pupils' writing assessments. A review of pupils' books showed evidence of good progress in writing across all year groups. However, standards of presentation and handwriting are not consistently high across all classes and there are missed opportunities in lessons to reinforce these basic skills. The substantial work carried out by the school to improve writing led to an increase in the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2016. Current data shows that this increase has been sustained.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and has been carefully organised to ensure that all pupils receive good access across all subjects. Pupils enjoy learning and they say that it is fun. They particularly enjoy the focus on real-life learning to ensure that learning is relevant, memorable and that pupils understand the purpose of what they are learning. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to school. For example, a visit is made to the local wind farm as part of an art project. There is also a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, including yoga and meditation. One parent commented how these particular activities help support her child's well-being.

- Subject leaders, who often lead more than one subject, monitor their subjects effectively. They are conscientious in their work and report to governors regularly on standards and developments in their area of responsibility.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a greater focus on the skills of handwriting and presentation to ensure high standards in this aspect of pupils' work
- basic number skills are regularly revisited and practised to develop pupils' confidence and fluency in calculation
- the recent good work in mathematics continues to develop and high-quality teaching and learning is securely embedded.

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

Yours sincerely

Aleksandra Hartshorne  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and two of your teachers. I also met with five representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I observed the quality of learning in all classes. Some of these observations I conducted with you. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's assessment information, the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, child protection procedures and policies, governing body minutes and a selection of pupils' work. As well as talking to pupils in lessons, I met with a group from different year groups to talk about their learning. I jointly looked at a range of pupils' books with one of your teachers. I viewed the 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as nine questionnaires from staff. There were no responses from pupils. At the beginning of the day, I had conversations with parents and carers.