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Mrs Sarah Foster  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Foster

### **Short inspection of Whitefield Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 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 March 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. At that time, you were asked to improve teaching further by matching tasks to pupils' needs, ensuring that no time is lost in lessons and sharing the best practice across the school. You were also asked to improve boys' writing and outdoor provision in early years. You have tackled each of these areas systematically and with a good degree of success.

The lessons which we visited were all well planned and included a good variety of activities which captured pupils' interests and moved their learning on at a good pace. In an English lesson, for example, the teacher made very good use of his voice and acting ability to accentuate particular grammatical points when reading pupils' work out loud. This helped increase the pupils' understanding. In a technology lesson, the teacher's firm command of the subject meant that the pupils were making rapid progress in devising their own computer games. Boys in a Year 2 class worked with concentration to write their reasons for thinking that a photograph of the local area had been taken in the nineteenth century rather than recently. Their handwriting was progressing well and they were using an increasing range of words. The early years setting is attractive, well resourced and provides pupils with easy access to outdoor as well as indoor areas. All teachers take responsibility for leading a subject and are given regular opportunities to develop their own expertise in a particular area and to share this with their colleagues. The staff I spoke to value this highly.

In our visits to classrooms we both identified that teachers did not consistently use correct grammar in their own speaking and writing. We also found that work in pupils' books was too often untidy.

You have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in your school, based on a detailed analysis of data and other information. Your plans are precise and clear and include regular reviews of progress towards your stated goals. You make judicious use of expertise from outside as well as inside the school to bring about improvements. For example, when results dipped in 2016, you worked with a school similar to your own, in another part of the country, to learn what you could do better. This led to rapid improvements, so that results last year were once again in line with national averages.

The governing body has provided support as well as challenge in bringing about such improvements. The governors are skilled and dedicated and have a detailed knowledge of the school, gained through regular visits to classrooms and the detailed reports provided by subject leaders and yourself. They ensure that you have the necessary resources to implement your plans and that funding is used appropriately. They agreed that it would be useful to identify precise targets against which they could assess the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and PE and sports development.

The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults and visitors. They are happy to talk about their work. For example, in a science lesson, they explained what they had to do to determine whether an object was transparent, translucent or opaque. They clearly enjoy the wide range of activities available to them through the broad curriculum that you offer.

Almost every parent I spoke to or who completed the online questionnaire was highly complimentary about the school. Parents repeatedly highlighted the quality of your leadership and the helpfulness and approachability of your staff. They said that their children enjoy coming to school and are safe there. These views were amply borne out by the well-ordered, friendly community of happy children and dedicated staff I encountered during my visit.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your records are up to date and detailed.

The pupils I spoke to said that they are happy and safe at school. They also feel safe on the way to and from school. Some bullying takes place but those pupils who had been bullied said that it had been dealt with effectively and had not happened again. Pupils know which staff to contact if they have any worries or concerns and are confident that they will receive the necessary support and help. They are taught how to keep themselves safe on roads and receive additional reminders before any school trip takes place. All pupils in Year 3 are taught to swim, so that they are safe in and near water. Fire drills are held regularly and pupils know exactly what to do

in the event of a fire. They also know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. The building and grounds are secure and you are conducting a vigorous campaign to ensure that parents consider pupils' safety when parking or turning their cars round outside the school.

You have rigorous systems for checking on the suitability of adults in the school to work with children. All staff and governors have received the necessary training in safeguarding. The staff I spoke to knew how to identify possible signs of abuse and what to do if they had any concerns about the welfare of a child. You work successfully with a range of external agencies to provide appropriate support for families who need extra help. Recently, you have worked closely with the police to strengthen your approaches to keeping pupils safe from political extremism.

### **Inspection findings**

- One line of enquiry for this inspection was the quality of provision in the early years. The proportion of early years children reaching a good level of development for their age was consistently above average from 2014 to 2016. The most recent results were again above average and children currently in the early years are making good progress, even though their starting points are lower than they have been in past. You identify the precise areas where particular children are not at the expected level for their age and provide them with additional support that matches their specific needs. As a result, outcomes in the early years continue to be good.
- Another question that I raised with you was the extent to which the traditionally good standards at key stage 1 are being maintained. In 2017, the results in the phonics screening at the end of Year 1 were above average for the fourth year running. Last summer, the proportion of seven-year-old girls reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was above the averages for girls across the country. The results for boys were not as good as those for girls but were above those for boys nationally. To raise standards further, you are focusing particularly on improving boys' writing. You have tried a number of approaches to this and have recently recruited the support of local authority staff to help you identify which approach has had the greatest impact.
- Since the last inspection, the attainment of 11-year-olds has been broadly in line with the national average. However, in 2016, there was a dip in the reading and mathematics results. I was interested to know the reason for this and to find out whether the subsequent improvements are being maintained. Your very detailed analysis of the 2016 results shows that, in that particular Year 6 group, there were more pupils than usual who had social difficulties. A considerable number of pupils fell a few marks short of their expected grade and there were several who did not complete the tests. You also concluded that pupils were not as good at solving mathematics problems as they were at arithmetic. You reorganised the groupings for mathematics and placed greater emphasis on problem-solving and on developing pupils' stamina and resilience. These approaches led to clear improvements in attainment and progress, which your most recent analysis shows are being maintained by the pupils currently in Year 6. You have identified that some pupils now in Years 4 and 5 need additional help, which you are

providing in a timely way.

- Attendance has been traditionally good. I wanted to know whether this continues to be the case. You provided me with a detailed analysis of the attendance of all pupils, boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The figures show that you have maintained your good record.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- identify precise targets against which they can assess the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and PE and sports development
- ensure that teachers provide pupils with consistently accurate models of spoken and written grammar
- ensure that the quality of presentation in pupils' books is consistently high.

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

Aelwyn Pugh  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with you and the three assistant headteachers. I met the coordinators for mathematics, English, physical education and the senior leader for curriculum. I also spoke to other members of staff. I met five governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body. In addition, I met two representatives of the local authority. I discussed safeguarding, behaviour and attendance with you, an assistant headteacher, the business manager and the inclusion manager. I met a group of seven pupils, chosen at random from Years 3 to 6, and listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading. I spoke to 20 parents as they brought their children to school and examined the 78 responses to the online questionnaire 'Parent View'. You and I visited lessons to observe teaching, look at books and talk to the pupils and staff.