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3 May 2018

Mr Adrian Ibison  
Headteacher  
North Road Primary School  
North Road  
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Lancashire  
LA5 9LQ

Dear Mr Ibison

### **Short inspection of North Road Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 April 2018, 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 May 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 provide calm and steady leadership for the school. Recently, during the absence of key members of staff, you have been resolute in maintaining the smooth running of the school. Middle leaders have risen to the challenge of taking more responsibility and are providing effective support for you and other members of staff. You have been extremely astute in the appointment of temporary teachers and, as a result, teaching remains good.

Governors have a wide range of skills and are supportive of the work you do. Equally, the governing body is effective in holding you to account and, thus, has a realistic view of the work of the school.

The core values of the school are tangible as you walk through the door, particularly those of resilience and respect. Pupils' behaviour is good. A small number of pupils sometimes present challenging behaviour, but this is well managed. There is an effective reward system in place, and pupils understand what is expected of them in each class. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They say staff are extremely caring and North Road is a happy place to be. One pupil said, 'school makes you feel good,' and another said, 'North Road is a place where you make friends really quickly.'

Pupils' outcomes in the key stage 2 national tests in 2017, in reading, writing and

mathematics, were good. Their progress in all three subjects was strong and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing was a particular strength. Outcomes in key stage 1 in 2017 were broadly average in reading and writing, and slightly below average in mathematics. Current work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information show that pupils across the school, including disadvantaged pupils, are making effective progress in all three subjects. This is because lessons are well planned, skilfully delivered and well matched to pupils' ability.

Pupils have access to a wide range of sports. The school benefits from employing a very effective sports mentor. Pupils receive high-quality coaching and they can choose from a wide range of after-school clubs, such as golf, football, netball and athletics. The school promotes healthy lifestyles extremely well.

The majority of parents and carers are happy with the education that their children receive. However, some feel that more frequent communication would be helpful. You and the governors are aware of this and have taken steps to ensure more regular communication.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to continue to improve teaching and further accelerate pupils' progress. You have ensured that teachers have continued to have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and that teaching is at least good. You have improved the teaching of mathematics. Pupils better use their reasoning skills to solve real-life mathematical problems, and they make strong progress in this subject.

The local authority has offered a range of support over the last year. This support has been successful in maintaining a successful leadership during the absence of some senior leaders.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders and governors have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The well-being of all pupils is a high priority. You have taken steps to ensure that staff have received the appropriate training in how to safeguard pupils. Staff have a clear understanding of how to keep pupils safe, and they know what do to if they are concerned about the welfare of a child. All appropriate checks are carried out on new members of staff to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children and these are recorded appropriately.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They say bullying is rare and if it did happen they are confident that staff would deal with it effectively. Relationships between pupils and staff are very strong. Pupils with whom I spoke said that staff keep them safe and that they feel secure, including while they are out of school on trips and visits.

## Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed on a number of key lines of enquiry.
- Firstly, we looked at the quality of pupils' writing. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 6 was well above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils working at a higher standard was lower. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test was below the national average. In response to those outcomes, you have implemented a new punctuation and grammar programme. This is beginning to bear fruit, and you assess that the proportion of pupils currently on track to achieve the expected standard in spelling, punctuation and grammar is increasing. Pupils write in a variety of styles and across the curriculum. However, you are aware that the most able pupils do not always write at sufficient length to ensure that more of them have the skills they need to reach the higher standard.
- Secondly, we looked at the achievement of the children in the early years. You have remodelled the early years environment since the last inspection. The outdoor area is attractive and provides exciting learning opportunities for the children. Indoors, children have access to a range of well-planned activities. During the inspection, children were enjoying learning in the water and construction areas. In addition, they listened attentively to a story in the outdoor area. Relationships between adults and children are strong and children are cared for well. However, the expectations of what children can achieve are not always high enough. On occasion, the assessments of what children can do are too generous and the work they do is overcontrolled by adults.
- We also looked at the quality of the wider curriculum, including the teaching of science. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn across all subjects. Science is taught well. Pupils plan and carry out investigations and practical work. For example, Year 1 pupils tested the absorbency of a range of materials, and pupils in Year 3 carried out a research project into climate change. The recent science week was memorable for pupils because they experienced a range of events and workshops. Other subjects are also taught effectively. For example, Year 4 pupils are learning the clarinet in music, and pupils in Year 5 enjoyed a trip to the museum to learn about Ancient Egyptians.
- We looked at the provision for those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The new coordinator of the provision for these pupils has a clear understanding of the support these pupils require. She is extremely experienced and has begun to build effective relationships with parents. There are clear procedures for the identification of pupils' needs, and they are well supported across the school. Teaching is strong and consequently pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities typically progress well.
- Finally, we looked at the behaviour of pupils. This was a key line of enquiry because, in the last academic year, the number of fixed-term exclusions was above average. There are a number of pupils who display challenging behaviour. An effective system to manage behaviour is in place and staff successfully use

this to manage these pupils' behaviour well. Pupils make a positive transition to secondary school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils have the skills to achieve the higher standards in writing
- the expectations of what children can achieve in the early years are high enough.

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

Emma Jackson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and other members of staff, including the mathematics and English leaders. I also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I talked with pupils in a meeting and in class.

I took account of 36 responses to the online questionnaires for parents, Parent View, and 15 responses to the survey for staff. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan and looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.