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Mr Marcus Still
Principal
Lindfield Primary Academy
School Lane
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Dear Mr Still

Short inspection of Lindfield Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 11 September 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Clementina Aina, 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 December 2010.

This school continues to be good.

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

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The school has undergone some substantial changes since the previous inspection. It became an academy with the University of Brighton Academies Trust in September 2014. At the same time, you became principal following the retirement of the previous postholder and the school expanded to three-form entry. This entailed a building programme to provide additional accommodation.

You lead the school with passion and a determination to put the needs of pupils at the heart of the school's work. You have created a team of enthusiastic and highly motivated staff. There is a strong ethos of ambition and high expectations within a caring and nurturing environment. You have strengthened links with the local community. Parents, carers, governors and leaders from the academy trust have full confidence in the leadership of the school. This is reflected in the comment by one parent, who wrote: 'The principal and his team are doing a fabulous job engaging

with parents to create an encouraging learning environment.'

You, together with other leaders, have focused relentlessly on raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning. You have a thorough understanding of the strengths of the school and have successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection. You have improved standards across the school year on year. You have worked closely with colleagues from the trust and the locality to share and learn from good practice. However, you know that the quality of teaching in key stage 1 is not as consistently strong as it is in key stage 2 and you are taking action to address this.

The school is a welcoming and happy place to be, underpinned by the school's values, which include celebration, success, perseverance and respect. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere that encourages high standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. They show respect, both towards each other and to adults, and enjoy talking to visitors about their school. Pupils appreciate the high quality of care that adults provide and know that their voices will be heard. They point to examples of where their ideas have been listened to and they feel that they can approach all adults with any concerns or worries they may have.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has effective systems in place for safeguarding pupils. School policies are fit for purpose and provide adults with clear guidance about what they should do if they have a concern that a child may be at risk from harm. Visitors to the school are carefully checked and all appropriate checks are made on adults who work in the school. There are four designated safeguarding lead officers who provide regular training for staff. There is a strong culture of safeguarding set by school leaders and governors who know and understand their role in keeping pupils safe.

Through the curriculum, pupils are taught to stay safe. They learn about e-safety through information technology lessons and regular updates in assemblies. They know that they should not provide personal information or photographs when using modern technology. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know about different types of bullying but say that it rarely occurs. The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey or who spoke to inspectors agreed or strongly agreed that their children are safe and well looked after in school. One parent wrote: 'Lindfield Primary Academy is a wonderful school. It provides a happy, safe environment in which my son is thriving.'

Inspection findings

- In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils, we also agreed to evaluate the following aspects of the school's work: the apparent improvement in pupils' outcomes in reading, writing

and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018, and the extent to which this reflects outcomes across the school; the extent to which current leaders have built on previous strengths to develop and maintain a broad and balanced curriculum; and the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

- There has been a year-on-year improvement in pupils' outcomes. In 2018, provisional data suggests that pupils in Year 6 made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books, as well as performance information provided by the school, shows that pupils in all year groups make sustained and rapid progress in English and mathematics. This is largely because teachers in all year groups have benefited from training and coaching to help to improve their skills. While this has led to substantial improvements across key stage 2, leaders know that there are still some inconsistencies in key stage 1, mainly due to some staff being new to their year groups. Action is being taken to address those areas of inconsistency.
- Teachers have high expectations and they are ambitious for all pupils. They have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and ask probing questions that help to build pupils' knowledge and deepen their understanding. The leaders for English and for mathematics have been particularly effective in putting into place actions that have raised standards in these subjects across the school. The English leader has introduced high-quality texts that stimulate pupils' interest and help to develop their writing skills. The mathematics leader has supported staff to provide more opportunities to challenge pupils by providing useful real-life contexts for solving problems. This has helped develop pupils' reasoning skills and embed their mathematical understanding. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils build their skills in writing and in mathematics progressively so that their learning in both subjects is embedded. Both leaders have an excellent understanding of what is working well and where further improvements may be made.
- School leaders, with the support of governors, have revised the curriculum to provide rich and meaningful experiences for pupils. Teachers provide interesting activities that stimulate pupils' imaginations, and this helps to maintain their interest in and concentration on their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 researched aspects of the Second World War in preparation for writing a newspaper report to describe how war was declared. Pupils take great pride in their work and they present it neatly and carefully. Themed weeks, such as art week, provide opportunities for pupils to spend longer periods of time on completing their work and this reinforces the skills they learn. The quality of art on display around the building is high and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities progress at similar rates to other pupils. Staff are skilled at pinpointing the specific learning difficulties that some pupils have, and the special needs coordinator (SENCo) supports staff in providing the right help for them. Sometimes, pupils receive effective support from trained teaching assistants to help them with their work in classrooms. For those few pupils who have more complex needs, staff provide tailor-made programmes to help them to overcome their difficulties.

- The new SENCo has quickly established herself in her role. This is because the induction arrangements prior to her joining the school were well thought out. The SENCo thoroughly reviewed pupils' needs and progress, and quickly established a good overview of the provision and outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The SENCo has undergone the required training and so is well placed to support her colleagues. She knows how to access specialist help where needed and she has established good communications with parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching is consistently strong across all classes in key stage 1.

I am copying this letter to the executive board and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, my colleague and I met with you and your vice-principal, subject leaders, governors, two trust representatives and two groups of pupils. We visited classrooms to observe pupils' work, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at pupils' work in writing, mathematics and topic work alongside leaders. We evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' learning and progress. We took account of 145 parent responses to the Ofsted online survey and the many free-text responses. We also considered the 33 responses to the staff survey and 144 responses to the pupils' survey.