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9 March 2021

Sue Sharpe  
Executive Headteacher  
Lynnfield Primary School  
Grosvenor Street  
Hartlepool  
TS26 8RL

Dear Mrs Sharpe

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Lynnfield Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Lee Elliott, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 February 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require improvement.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that governors verify the information leaders share with them so that they have an accurate view of the impact of leaders' actions.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, changes in senior leadership have taken place. An assistant headteacher left the school in July 2020. A new leadership structure was established in September 2020, with two assistant headteachers now working across both Lynnfield Primary School and another federated primary school.
- Around three quarters of all pupils were educated remotely at some point in the autumn term 2020.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately a quarter of all pupils were being educated in school. Around one half of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and one third of those who the school have identified as vulnerable were attending school.

### **Main findings**

- You and your leadership team, with the support of governors, have made the continuation of education a priority during the current period of national restrictions. Pupils in school, and those accessing education remotely, are experiencing the range of subjects which make up the school's usual curriculum. You have ensured that pupils who are working at home have the necessary digital devices and equipment they need to complete their school work. New software has enabled teachers to set work remotely and provide feedback to pupils about their work.
- Curriculum leaders have carefully considered the subject content that pupils will learn during COVID-19 restrictions. They have changed the sequence of the curriculum in some subjects to take account of those pupils working from home. For example, in mathematics, teachers have delayed the teaching of fractions in key stage 2 because they feel this content requires the use of additional resources which would only be available in school. In its place, teachers have used assessment information to plan and revisit aspects of number work that pupils may have missed.
- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. The school's new curriculum for reading has translated well to remote education. All pupils can access a daily phonics or reading lesson, as well as story times. Leaders have made sure pupils learning from home have access to books that match their phonics knowledge. Those pupils who are in school continue to receive additional reading support to help them to catch up, should they need it. Pupils who are working at home are not able to access additional help with reading. Leaders

are aware that this is an area they need to explore to ensure that pupils who need to catch-up do not fall further behind.

- Prior to March 2020, you were in the process of evaluating and developing the curriculum. Although you put this work on hold for a short while due to the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus), you have recently started to look at this aspect of the school's work again. Subject content is appropriately sequenced in curriculum plans in order that pupils' knowledge builds over time. Leaders have correctly begun to focus on how they check that pupils have learned and remembered the most important knowledge in the school's curriculum.
- The special education needs coordinator has ensured that pupils with SEND are supported well. Teachers deliver the curriculum carefully in steps that are easily understood by pupils who may find the learning difficult. Additionally, teachers provide constructive support for pupils with SEND who are working from home. For example, in some cases, teachers have provided recorded audio instructions that explain clearly what the pupils need to do. There are appropriate systems in place for pupils with SEND to seek support if they need it, whether they are working in school or at home.
- Governors are supportive of school leaders. While governors understand that the current circumstances have placed additional demands on staff, they have continued to ask challenging questions of leaders in their regular meetings. Governors recognise that they need to do more to verify the information that is shared with them so that they have a clear and accurate view of the impact of leaders' actions.
- Local authority advisers have supported the school effectively to evaluate and improve curriculum plans. This work has continued remotely through the pandemic. The reading leader has worked with an external consultant to develop her understanding of how pupils learn to read. She is now using her expertise to coach staff in school to ensure that all staff are expert teachers of reading.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, advisers from the local authority and members of the governing body. We spoke to pupils in school and staff to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also visited a reading session, looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' written work.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Scargill-Knight  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**