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19 April 2021

Robert Matthews  
Headteacher  
Lightwoods Primary School  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mr Matthews

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

Following my remote inspection with Ian Tustian, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 30 March 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 2020.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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 leaders accurately assess and identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- ensure that staff have the expertise to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership and governance of the school. Following the last inspection, an interim headteacher led the school until December 2020. An assistant headteacher retired at Christmas 2020. You and a new deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2021. On your arrival, you clarified the leadership roles assigned to staff. In addition, the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body have changed. Two other governors left. They have been replaced by two new governors.
- Between January and 5 March 2021, approximately 40% of pupils were educated on site. Approximately 80% of vulnerable pupils and 60% of pupils with education, health and care plans attended school.
- At the time of the inspection, 97% of pupils were attending on site.

### **Main findings**

- Since joining the school in January 2021, you have worked with pace to make improvements. You have shared a clear improvement plan with staff. Staff understand this plan and know what needs to be done to improve the school. They are pulling together as a team. As part of your immediate actions, you and your leaders have remodelled the school values. Despite the pandemic, you have made sure that pupils, staff and parents understand these values well.
- During the spring term 2021, all pupils accessed a broad range of subjects. Pupils who were learning at home learned the same content as those pupils in school. You ensured that pupils who were at home had daily, online contact with their teachers. Teachers used this time well to help pupils with their work. As a result, most pupils kept pace with their learning.
- Since all pupils returned to school in March 2021, leaders have taken effective steps to help them make a positive return to school. For example, school leaders extended playtime for pupils in Year 1. This extra time helped pupils to re-learn playtime routines. In addition, leaders introduced a system for pupils to share their feelings. This means teachers are well placed to quickly identify those who may need extra support at this time.

- Leaders ensure that all pupils can become confident and fluent readers. Since pupils have returned to school, teachers have made appropriate checks on what pupils know and remember. Teachers in the Reception Year and Year 1, for instance, have checked to see which letters and sounds pupils recognise. Consequently, teachers know precisely which sounds pupils have remembered and any that have been forgotten. Leaders use the information from these checks well. They act swiftly to ensure that pupils who have fallen behind get extra help from well-trained adults. This is helping these pupils to catch up quickly.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders took steps to improve the curriculum in the foundation subjects. They introduced curriculum plans from an online resource. Consequently, pupils learned a broader range of subjects. However, when you joined the school you quickly identified that these plans do not closely match pupils' starting points. You are taking action to address this. A new curriculum will be introduced after Easter. Staff training to make sure they understand how the new curriculum is planned is already underway. This is helping teachers to develop their subject expertise.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership of pupils with SEND lacked precision. Since then, improvements have been too slow. However, new staff appointments have significantly strengthened the leadership of this area. New leaders have rightly checked the quality of support for pupils with SEND and now have a clear and accurate view of how well their needs are met. Leaders recognise there is much to do to improve the provision for these pupils. Checks to identify and assess pupils' needs are not always completed at the right time. In addition, staff do not adapt the curriculum well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND do not consistently get the support they need to achieve well.
- Governors provide support and challenge to leaders. They have a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils are safe. They receive helpful information about the school. They use this information to hold leaders to account. Governors regularly gather the views of parents. This ensures that they have an accurate picture of the school.
- The local authority has helped to strengthen the school's leadership. Officers were instrumental in the important appointments of you and the new chair of governors. You have also received support from the multi-academy trust you intend to join. Trust leaders have provided effective training. This training is helping develop staff's knowledge of the features of an effective curriculum.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a

representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We scrutinised the minutes of governing body meetings and other documents. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 70 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Stevens  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**