

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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24 May 2021

Mrs Susan Sharpe  
Lynnfield Primary School  
Grosvenor Street  
Hartlepool  
TS26 8RL

Dear Mrs Sharpe

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lynnfield Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection 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 improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

#### **Context**

Leaders have continued to work with teachers and external partners to develop the curriculum. The ability of leaders and governors to check the impact of the wider curriculum has been restricted by COVID-19.

There have been no significant staffing changes since the previous inspection.

## **Main findings**

You and your strategic leadership team have maintained a strong focus on school improvement. You have worked with external partners to strengthen subject leadership. This has built greater capacity and momentum for improvement. At the same time as improving the curriculum, your team has carefully supported children and families in your community.

You have made reading a key focus in your improvement journey. Your reading leader has worked with a consultant to develop her subject expertise. This consultant continually reviews the reading programme. This reading expertise is effectively shared with teachers and teaching assistants. Your staff show an insightful understanding of barriers to reading. For example, your reading leader is aware that tests do not always reveal the problems some pupils experience in becoming fluent readers. Such insights are leading to clear improvements in the teaching of early reading.

Your teachers enthuse pupils with the texts they read in class. They have selected books that pupils can relate to and which widen their horizons. Pupils talk perceptively about the themes covered in the books they read. They explain how books develop their respect for and understanding of others. For example, they explained how a class novel made them aware of the challenges faced by refugees.

You are using commercial schemes to build staff expertise in mathematics. Teachers are using Department for Education approved resources to address gaps in learning that may have occurred due to COVID-19. You are aware that more work is needed to develop the mathematics curriculum.

Your team has significantly enhanced the wider curriculum. Subject leaders have worked with a range of partners to develop ambitious plans. They have built a big picture of the curriculum that makes it clear what pupils will learn over time. In music, pupils progress from basic rhythms to more complex notation. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum enables pupils to acquire secure knowledge. The pupils I talked to showed an extremely mature understanding of equalities and of the protected characteristics. The science curriculum places an emphasis on important knowledge. COVID-19 has limited leaders' ability to check how well this curriculum is reflected in pupils' knowledge and skills. This will be a focus in the months ahead.

You have sustained improvement at a time of unprecedented challenge. Many pupils and their families have faced considerable difficulties as a result of COVID-19. Staff have made the safety of pupils a priority. Through practical support and changes to the curriculum, your team has actively supported the well-being of pupils.

Governors are mindful of the work you have done to secure improvement. They are aware of your work to develop reading and to keep children safe. At the February 2021 monitoring inspection, governors were asked to further check the information given to them by school leaders. This process has started. Governors are already exploring how they check the impact of the curriculum.

You have worked well with your local authority teaching and learning adviser. She has seen significant improvement in many aspects of the school's work. The local authority has helped to coach staff and model curriculum improvement. Your staff now have the capacity to lead such improvement themselves.

Your pupils are powerful advocates of your work. The pupils I talked to valued the care and support of your staff. They described how new approaches were helping them to remember more number facts in mathematics. They also described how the school's three simple rules, 'be ready, be respectful, be safe', ran through school life. They described how these rules were reflected in the books they read, the discussions they held, and in behaviour around school. They all appreciated the quality of education they received.

### **Additional support**

Your staff have worked closely with the local authority to develop the curriculum. They have developed subject expertise by working with many partners, including local schools and the music service. Your teachers have also worked with experts from a mathematics hub. This work is enhancing teachers' subject knowledge. It is helping to build ambitious curriculum plans.

Your reading leader continues to work with a specialist consultant to refine the phonics programme. This ongoing training is developing the expertise of staff in helping pupils to read.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and your strategic leadership team. I also met subject leaders with responsibility for reading, science, music and PSHE. We discussed the actions taken to improve the school since the last inspection. I undertook lesson visits in English and mathematics. I also discussed attendance and aspects of safeguarding. I met a group of Year 6 pupils to discuss behaviour, safety and the curriculum. I held a remote discussion with the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. I also met your local authority teaching and learning adviser. I looked at curriculum plans and at some examples of work in pupils' books.

I considered 23 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 15 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 10 free-text responses.

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 Borough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**