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5 July 2021

Amanda Harrison  
Headteacher  
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West Sussex  
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Dear Mrs Harrison

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

Following my visit to your school on 16 June 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you 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.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all staff are well trained to teach phonics so they can effectively support pupils in learning to read
- strengthen staff's knowledge and skills to effectively implement the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

## **Context**

The new headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2020. A special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed internally and took up post in January 2021. New members of the governing body have joined since the last section 5 inspection. This is the first year that the school has three classes in each year group.

COVID-19 has further impacted upon the school this summer term. Two classes had to close for a few days just before the May half-term break. During this time, pupils learned remotely.

## **Main findings**

Since you started as headteacher, you have galvanised your team to bring about change and carefully reorganised the leadership team to support your plans. Parents, staff and governors appreciate the much-needed changes you are making. You know there is still much work to do.

Subject leaders show a greater insight in their work to design an ambitious curriculum. For example, in science knowledge is well sequenced from early years to Year 6. The science team has adapted plans appropriately to take into account gaps in pupils' knowledge that have come about because of the pandemic. Most subjects are well planned. You are finalising the planning in history and languages.

You are making sure that teachers develop their subject knowledge, and this is helping them deliver the curriculum more effectively. Teachers are thinking more about how they can provide regular opportunities for pupils to recall previous knowledge. Their assessments of pupils' learning are more accurate. You recognise that this remains work in progress.

You are starting to raise staff's expectations for what pupils with SEND can achieve. This group of pupils are not supported well enough with their learning in the classroom. Additional catch-up sessions are not working well because the work set is not closely linked to what has been taught in class. As a result, the gap is widening for some of these pupils.

You have transformed the culture of reading. The English team has made great headway in connecting the reading and writing curriculum. The new library exemplifies and celebrates this work. Teachers are using high-quality and diverse books to enhance the quality of pupils' writing. They have been successful in encouraging pupils to take more pride in the presentation of their work.

The pandemic has delayed the planned face-to-face phonics training for all staff. You have organised this to happen next term, but currently the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Staff are not providing the right support for those pupils who need

extra help. In catch-up sessions, pupils are reading some books that do not match the sounds they are learning. As a result, many pupils are still struggling to learn to read.

Governors know the school's priorities and are united in their high aspirations for all pupils. They are checking that the recommendations from external advisers are in place. They recognise that they need to monitor the impact on pupils' learning closely to help the school continue to move forward.

### **Additional support**

You are benefiting from the local authority's support and monitoring. Useful reports from external advisers are providing clear actions to support you in your work, particularly for pupils with SEND. External training for subject leaders is continuing to strengthen their curriculum and subject knowledge.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the two deputy headteachers with responsibility for curriculum and inclusion, the SENCo, pupils, staff, five governors, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I considered monitoring reports from the local authority, sampled curriculum planning and reviewed the school's improvement plan. I took into account 41 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including six free-text comments, and 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

James Broadbridge  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**