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Julia Tones  
Headteacher  
Fellgate Primary School  
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NE32 4XA

Dear Mrs Tones

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Fellgate Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 11 November 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders, governors and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also carried out meetings with other staff, met with pupils, looked at pupils' work, spoke to parents, visited the additional resource provision and scrutinised other documentation, including the single central record. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Fellgate primary school continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.**

The school should take further action to:

- evaluate the impact of the curriculum and make any necessary improvements to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils
- support subject leaders further, so they are able to provide highly effective quality assurance in their subjects.

### **Main findings**

Shortly after the previous graded inspection, you were appointed as headteacher in October 2018. Subsequently, a major staffing restructure was carried out to manage a deficit budget. Significant changes were made to staffing levels in the additional resource provision, known as The Base.

At the time of the inspection, a new building was nearing completion. The building will serve the whole school and the local community. It will be used as a training facility for parents across the local authority. The building will provide a sensory room and a kitchen space to support pupils' life skills. This additional resource will support parent and community groups and provide the location for the headteacher's office.

You and your leadership team have focused on the highlighted areas for improvement since the last inspection. You correctly identified that the previous curriculum did not have sufficient content, depth or appropriate sequencing of knowledge. As a result, a new curriculum was implemented in January 2022. Significant work has taken place to improve the curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the small steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn. This knowledge builds on what pupils have learned before and ensures that they are ready for their next steps. You have ensured that improved curriculum planning is now in place for all subjects. Important knowledge in each subject is clearly identified from early years to Year 6. You have ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of your pupils. Leaders have been careful to ensure that appropriate adaptations are being made to match the scheme to the needs of the pupils. In other subject areas, such as science and music, existing curriculum plans have been adapted and improved. There are now long-term plans in place for subjects from early years to Year 6.

You correctly identified that some subject leaders did not fully understand what children learn in the early years and how this contributes to what they learn next. To develop this understanding, subject leaders now work in partnership with the early years leader. There are now defined links between early years and the rest of the school. New progression curriculum maps are in place that link areas of learning from early years to subject areas in key stage 1. As a result, children in Reception Year are ready for Year 1.

Subject leaders have received training and support to develop their subject leadership knowledge. They now have a better understanding of the importance of what content needs to be taught and in what order. Leaders have begun to check the effectiveness of their curriculum but need to carry out further work on monitoring the impact of recent curriculum changes. As subject leaders vary in experience, it is also vital that ongoing leadership support is continued to strengthen middle leadership in all subjects.

Previously, pupils from the Base were not given sufficient opportunity to access mainstream learning. You recognised that, in some subjects, pupils in the Base did not benefit from the same curriculum as their peers in the mainstream school. There was not a consistent approach to how subjects were taught. As a result, some pupils in the Base had gaps in their knowledge. You have now ensured that there is a consistent approach to what pupils learn across the school. This change has dramatically improved curriculum consistency for Base pupils. More pupils now spend increased time accessing mainstream classes where appropriate. Teachers from the Base and mainstream now plan together. This enables teachers to share ideas and ensure that pupils do not have gaps in their learning. It also means that adults who may support Base pupils in mainstream have supportive information prior to lessons. In addition to improved curriculum support for pupils in the Base, there is increased inclusivity for pupils' social and emotional development. Leaders have identified which pupils benefit from additional time in the mainstream environment during breaktimes, lunchtimes or less structured time in classes. Actions such as this are helping to support pupil's personal development and bring about an improved whole school ethos. Leaders have high expectations for pupils from the Base.

Pupils talk positively about the curriculum. They enjoy what they study and can remember what they have learned. The sequence of lessons within a subject supports pupils' ability to know and remember more.

Senior leaders, including governors and the local authority, now have a clear vision for the school. There is a clear drive to improve the curriculum and inclusivity for all pupils. Governors have the skills and experience to support and challenge school leaders. Governors check for themselves that leaders are taking the right steps for the benefits of all pupils, particularly those with additional needs. Link governors work effectively with leaders in school, providing curriculum, pastoral and well-being support.

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

Yours sincerely

David Milligan  
**His Majesty's Inspector**