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30 January 2025

Amanda Abbott  
Headteacher  
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Thompson Street West  
Darlington  
County Durham  
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Dear Mrs Abbott

### **Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Harrowgate Hill Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 12 December 2024, 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 meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, including governors, 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 visited lessons, spoke to pupils and sampled pupils' work from different areas of the curriculum. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

### **Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.**

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who are at the earliest stages of learning to read benefit from improved support.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, you have continued to ensure the areas of the school that were identified in the previous inspection report have been the consistent focus of school improvement. You have undertaken work to ensure the curriculum in foundation subjects is clearly defined. This work is beginning to have an impact on what pupils know and remember in some subjects. Pupils are increasingly taking pride in their work and their achievements in the curriculum.

You have introduced clear systems for identifying the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers are now beginning to provide more effective adaptations and support for pupils with SEND because they have a clearer understanding of pupils' needs. You are aware of the need to have a clearer view of the support pupils with SEND who are at the earliest stages of reading are receiving.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's improvement priorities. They offer challenge around the next steps. They are positive about the improvements being made in the school. Governors feel well informed about, and connected to, the direction the school is moving in.

Support from the local authority and external support will continue to focus on developing consistent and effective teaching across the curriculum and supporting leaders in continuing to help staff embed their understanding of supporting pupils with SEND. This support enables governors and leaders to have a clearer picture of the performance of the school and the areas that need further focus as the school continues its journey.

You have introduced clear systems for subject leaders to make checks on how well the subjects they lead are being taught. Some of these checks are around ensuring that curriculum coverage is sufficient and the school's expectations around frequency and presentation of work are being met. You are in the process of refining the checks leaders undertake so they can be more focused on the impact of the curriculum, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND. Through the checks undertaken by leaders, you have been able to assure yourself that pupils are developing a more secure understanding of protected characteristics and world faiths.

Since the last inspection, you have introduced school rules that are clearer and more easily understood by pupils and staff. Pupils understand these new rules. You have rightly identified where routines and transition points at different parts of the school day could be further improved.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Darlington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Liam Colclough  
**His Majesty's Inspector**