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Mrs Alison Humphries  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Humphries

### **Short inspection of High Lane Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in December 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since the previous inspection, you and the deputy headteacher are new in post. With the senior leadership team and staff, you have ensured that the school is welcoming, friendly and safe. There is a strong culture for learning permeating through all aspects of the school day. You have accurately identified areas in the school development plan that need to be addressed. The evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate.

Pupils are friendly and enthusiastic in sharing their views of the school. They told me about their many roles and responsibilities and the subjects that they enjoy the most. Pupils spoke about the opportunities they have to learn to play a musical instrument and to engage in a wide range of sporting opportunities, including cross-country running, cricket, football and dodgeball. Pupils said that name-calling and bullying did not happen often and, if it did, the staff were quick to deal with it. Pupils spoke to me with confidence about democracy. They understand the purpose of the school council, and why it is important for them to listen to the views of others. The behaviour of the pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils behave well in lessons, around school and at playtimes.

Parents and carers that I spoke to were positive in their views of the school. Those that responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were equally positive. They felt that their children were safe and well cared for. A view typical of many was: 'The school is making far better progress under its new leadership. There is

now a more dynamic approach to learning.'

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked school leaders to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and to accelerate achievement, particularly in mathematics. Over the course of the previous two years, pupils' attainment in mathematics has increased. Greater numbers now reach the expected standards and increasing numbers reach the higher standards. From observing learning, looking at assessment information and looking at pupils' books across the school, we could see that teachers match work carefully to the ability of the pupils. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to extend their mathematical learning across a range of subjects and real-life contexts. For example, in Year 6 pupils apply their mathematical skills to create graphical representations, illustrating the effect that exercise has on pulse rate. In Year 3, we observed pupils applying a range of calculation strategies to find costs and work out change from a given amount. However, we agreed that you need to do more to ensure that pupils make better progress in mathematics between key stages 1 and 2, ensuring that this is reflected in published data at the end of key stage 2.

Inspectors also asked leaders to strengthen the quality of leadership and management. There is a new leadership team in place since the previous inspection, and new members of the governing board have been appointed. You have introduced a system of research-based performance management. You ensure that the teachers keep an up-to-date knowledge of best practice through collaborative working with each other and with staff from other schools in the area. You align performance management targets to the progress that pupils make. You facilitate regular pupil progress meetings where you discuss the progress of pupils at an individual level.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As the designated lead for safeguarding, you have ensured that pupils are safe at this school. You work closely with a wide range of agencies, including children's social care, the education welfare officer, school health and the emergency services. Detailed records show that all training is up to date for basic awareness and 'Prevent' duty training. You, several staff and governors have received safer recruitment training. New members of staff receive training in a timely manner.

You recognise that some pupils are at risk from harmful social media activity outside of school. You tackle this issue proactively through the curriculum. For example, you recently organised an e-safety meeting for parents to attend. You were disappointed in the low take-up and had to cancel the meeting. You have rescheduled the meeting for a date later in the year. Pupils learn about water safety, road safety and how to stay safe online.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I focused on three lines of enquiry. The first of these related to the progress that pupils make in writing by the end of key stage 2.

Published data shows that over the previous two years the progress that pupils make in writing has declined. Your analysis of the assessments showed you that pupils were not applying their grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge well enough in their writing to achieve the higher standards. As a result, you have changed the way you teach writing. Through monitoring activities, you found that teachers were focusing too much on the planning for their own year groups. You found that that more needed to be done to ensure that there was a clearer progression of skills as pupils moved through the school. You now monitor the quality of writing regularly and build upon actions identified. For example, recent monitoring of writing showed that the majority of pupils' books were in line with your expectations for the application of grammar, punctuation and spelling; however, a small number were not. A whole-school training day was delivered to help teachers plan the teaching of writing more consistently. Teachers now have clear guidance about what they should teach, with realistic expectations about what pupils can achieve. Teachers continue to challenge the most able pupils.

- Throughout key stages 1 and 2, there is evidence of pupils applying spelling patterns with consistency in their writing. Handwriting is a strength of many pupils and they are keen to earn a 'pen licence' from an early age. As pupils move through the school, editing becomes more commonplace, with pupils learning from reflecting on their own work and the work of their peers.
- The most able pupils apply higher level writing features with increasing independence. In all classes, pupils have access to a wide range of resources, including vocabulary lists, phonics mats and dictionaries, to help them to improve their writing. Progress information for current pupils shows that with the exception of the current Year 5 and 6 classes, pupils are making expected progress. There are also increased numbers of pupils reaching the higher standards. You said that to improve writing further, you want to build pupils' knowledge of genres. You also want to ensure that levels of support decrease and levels of independent writing increase, as pupils move through the school. We agreed that this new approach to the teaching of writing should continue, ensuring that the actions that you have put into place are reflected in end-of-key-stage-2 published assessment information.
- The second area that I looked at during the inspection focused on the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum. From an early age, writing is a strength across the curriculum. Children in the Reception class have opportunities to mark-make and write in a range of contexts. You set high expectations for the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum. The standards of pupils' work across the curriculum are in line with the high standards seen in their English books. In science, pupils plan and record experiments. In design and technology, they evaluate materials and explain in depth. In Year 1, the pupils write about their future ambitions. In Year 6, pupils write reports about the aftermath of the Second World War while employing historical enquiry skills into their writing. You have invested heavily in resources to ensure that pupils have access to a range of quality texts and reading materials. You have created a new library space to foster a love of reading and a love of books. You have exciting plans in place to develop the space further with the help of the parent forum.
- The final area that I looked at related to how well leaders and governors carried

out their statutory responsibilities. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well cared for and receive bespoke support. As the temporary special educational needs coordinator, you closely monitor the progress of each individual pupil. The majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.

- Governors oversee the spending and impact of the pupil premium and sports premium funding. They are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and they hold you and the senior leaders to account. Governors are aware of the priorities to make the school better and have a realistic view of the school's own self-evaluation. They have an understanding of how the quality of teaching affects the progress of pupils.
- At the start of the inspection, several areas of the school website were missing and did not meet minimum statutory requirements. You quickly rectified this early in the inspection. However, we agreed that as the leadership team, and the governing board, has changed considerably in recent times, all leaders and governors should be more aware of all of their statutory responsibilities. In particular, they should ensure that the school website is compliant and effectively monitored.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build upon the effective actions already taken to enhance the progress that pupils make in mathematics and writing by the end of key stage 2
- the website is compliant and effectively monitored, ensuring that it remains so.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and members of your leadership team. I met with a representative of the local authority. I spoke to members of the governing body including the chair of the governing body. Together, we visited classes where we observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. I took account of the 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's

online questionnaire. I evaluated the 28 free-text responses. I considered the responses of eight staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the 21 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and the school development plan. I viewed a range of information about pupils' attainment and progress. I scrutinised the school's single central record. I undertook a review of the school's website.