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8 March 2018

Mrs Christine Tuff  
Interim Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Tuff

### **Short inspection of Lacey Gardens Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 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 January 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school. The school had an executive headteacher for a short while, who was responsible for the infant and junior school. This arrangement has since changed and you are currently the interim headteacher of Lacey Gardens Junior School.

You have rewritten the school improvement plan to ensure that it meets the needs of the school. Alongside the other senior leaders, you have also implemented a new behaviour policy. You are putting actions in place to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improves.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers asked questions of pupils during lessons to check on their knowledge and understanding. During our tour of the school together, we noted that where teaching was effective, teachers asked pupils appropriate questions to further deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 were asked questions about life on an Orkney island during the time of stone age Britain. However, we noticed that not all teachers used their questioning skills consistently to probe pupils' understanding and extend their learning.

Not all teachers adapt their lessons proficiently to meet the needs of pupils. Where teaching and learning is effective, teachers check on pupils' learning during lessons by asking appropriate questions and adapting tasks accordingly to meet their specific needs. In some classes, pupils are challenged and well supported. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Together, we visited mathematics lessons and looked in pupils' books where we could see that pupils had opportunities to develop a broad range of number skills. They had opportunities to use and apply their mathematical understanding to problem-solving activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 had opportunities to use their multiplication and division skills to explore fractions. They solved fraction problems because they could use and apply their calculation skills effectively. They were challenged to use their reasoning skills to justify their answers. This issue from the previous inspection has been addressed effectively.

The teaching of phonics is inconsistent in its impact. Pupils are not routinely given opportunities to use and apply their phonics skills accurately. When we looked in pupils' books, we could see that too few pupils are using and applying their phonics skills consistently during spelling activities. You recognise that staff need training to refresh their skills in teaching phonics, so that pupils make faster progress in reading and writing. In 2017, pupils' progress in reading declined. However, their progress in writing has improved since 2016. Leaders have delivered training to improve aspects of spelling and writing. These are having an impact on raising standards in writing. This is testament to leaders' capacity to make improvements.

Pupils value the enrichment opportunities on offer. They enjoy the range of trips and the chance to play a range of sports. Pupils are proud of their achievements and were pleased to tell me about their recent tournament success in playing 'Goal Ball'. They appreciate the work of the elected school council and how it has improved the range of outdoor play equipment.

During the inspection, we noted that further improvements are also needed to develop the skills and expertise of leaders and the governing body. Some leaders are new to their role. You ensure that leaders receive appropriate support so that they can further develop their role. In a short time, some leaders have already developed opportunities to enhance the curriculum with engaging learning opportunities.

Some parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View noted that they do not think the school manages pupils' behaviour as well as it could. Some parents who spoke with me raised concerns about the inconsistent management of behaviour at the school. You have recently reviewed the school's behaviour policy and have taken steps to tackle this. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in classes, around the school and on the playground was good.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors are appropriately trained and receive regular updates. Leaders responsible for safeguarding promptly refer any concerns that staff may have.

Your records are well organised and detailed. You and your team have a thorough understanding of the signs of abuse. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities should they have a concern.

Pupils say they feel safe and know how the school keeps them safe. They receive visits from police officers to remind them how to keep safe in the local community. Pupils have road safety lessons, so they know how to keep safe when riding their bikes. The school's junior road safety team also promotes road safety in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils who spoke with me confidently stated how to keep safe when online. They know they must report any concerns they may have when using the internet.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I looked at what leaders are doing to ensure that the progress of middle-ability pupils and disadvantaged pupils improves in reading, writing and mathematics. I also looked at how leaders develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Some of the parents who spoke with me and those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, are not wholly satisfied with behaviour at the school. They have concerns that behaviour is not managed consistently by adults in the school. You explained that you and your team have recently reviewed the school's behaviour policy to ensure that behaviour is managed effectively. Pupils with whom I spoke said they knew the school's rewards and sanctions for behaviour. They explained clearly the range of rewards that they receive. Some pupils have opportunities to attend a before-school club to help them quickly settle in to the school day. Leaders have not yet fully evaluated the success of the new behaviour policy and the new systems in place to ensure that they support the needs of all pupils. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was managed effectively by teachers and adults. Pupils respond well to adults and their classmates.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about a range of religions and their cultures. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have enjoyed learning about countries in the Far East, their cultures and traditions. Pupils with whom I spoke understand the need to show respect and tolerance to others. In classrooms, pupils work well together and share their ideas willingly.
- Pupils' progress in reading has been below average for the past two years for the middle-ability pupils and disadvantaged pupils. The recent changes to leadership and management are leading to improvements in the teaching and learning of reading. For example, the English leaders who were appointed last September have organised a range of reading experiences to encourage pupils to read more often. They have introduced a 'reading dog' for pupils to read to, as well as reading theme days. Pupils said they enjoyed reading regularly with an adult. Leaders have evaluated some aspects of the English provision and provided feedback to teachers to improve the quality of reading. For example, leaders have improved the reading provision in class to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their comprehension skills more fully. Teachers use a range of texts across the curriculum so that pupils are able to use and apply their reading and comprehension skills effectively. Classrooms have interesting and engaging reading areas to promote the love of reading. These initiatives have been effective in improving the progress that pupils make in reading.

- Pupils' progress in writing is below average for the middle ability and disadvantaged pupils. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not high enough. Some teachers do not design tasks well enough to meet the needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress slows and they do not make the progress of which they are capable. Where pupils make good progress, teachers provide additional resources and develop pupils' understanding through appropriate questions to extend their learning. Leaders have attended training to support teachers to improve the quality of writing in the school. Leaders are monitoring this aspect carefully to ensure standards improve.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics declined further in 2017. The mathematics leader has provided training to staff to build on their knowledge and understanding of problem-solving and reasoning. Pupils' books show they have a range of opportunities to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills and to deepen their understanding. Pupils with whom I spoke said that they enjoyed their mental mathematics challenges. They said it is a fun way to learn their times tables and number facts.
- You work with leaders at all levels to ensure that they are clear about their roles and responsibilities. You ensure that leaders, at all levels, have opportunities to be fully involved in the monitoring of their area of responsibility. Subject leaders have monitored pupils' workbooks, trained teachers and reviewed policies. Leaders' actions are starting to have an impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors have managed the changes in leadership and management well. They have a clear vision for the school and know what needs to be done to further improve the quality of education. They check the work of the school regularly and engage with staff to ensure that they have a full picture of the school's provision. They know there is further work to be done to improve standards. Recently, the governing body has appointed new governors who have significant expertise to help move the school forward. They have received relevant training to support them in their role. They acknowledge that further development of their skills and expertise would support them to challenge leaders more effectively.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers ask questions, and design and adapt tasks appropriately for disadvantaged pupils and middle-ability pupils so that they make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers consistently teach phonics in line with the school's policy so pupils can better use and apply their phonics skills when reading and spelling
- middle leaders develop their skills and expertise so they have a comprehensive understanding of pupils' standards in their area of responsibility and hold teachers fully to account for the progress that pupils make
- governors develop fully their skills and expertise so they can challenge leaders more effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Nuttall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and I also met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with parents before school and with a group of pupils about their school experience. Jointly with you, I visited a range of classes and, in addition, we sampled pupils' books. I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the record of recruitment checks on staff. I evaluated the school's documentation about pupils' achievement, planning for improvement and attendance. I met with the English and mathematics subject leaders. I took account of the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 23 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. There were 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and 20 responses from pupils to consider.