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Mrs Sue Meek
Headteacher
Walmore Hill Primary School
Walmore Hill
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Gloucester
Gloucestershire
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Dear Mrs Meek

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Walmore Hill Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the teachers and their assistants whose lessons I observed in all three classes, the Chair of the Governing Body with whom I met, and the representative of the local authority with whom I spoke on the telephone.

Since the inspection on 1 July 2009, the number of pupils on roll has fallen from 67 to 43. Numbers in the school tend to fluctuate over time. As a result of the last inspection, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

satisfactory progress in making improvements

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the time of the last inspection, there has been a modest improvement in the attainment and achievement of the pupils at the end of Year 6. Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was broadly average. Although the overall results were better than in 2009 and there was an improvement in the pupils' overall rate of progress, there was still some lag in the quality of writing, where progress was lower than in reading and mathematics. However, exercise books for Years 5 and 6 and observation of an English lesson for pupils in the lower half of Key Stage 2

showed that the school has taken steps to tackle the underachievement in writing which are beginning to bear fruit.

The pace and challenge of learning in lessons has improved since the last inspection, having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and progress. For example, pupils in one class were eager to use the contents and index pages of reference books to find information on animals after the teacher had shown them how to do this by using books to find out how to feed her new kitten. In another class, pupils worked productively in groups to help one another discover the size of the perimeters of different shapes. In all three classes teaching assistants play an important role in supporting learning and assessing progress in lessons. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are integrated well with the learning in Key Stage 1 and full use is made of the facilities to promote independent and active learning through interesting tasks.

More accurate and frequent assessment throughout the school is helping pupils to understand what they have achieved and how to improve their work. However, marking is not of such a good quality in mathematics as in English and there is sometimes a tendency to give praise for really good work without explaining why it is good or how it could be made even better. Pupils are able to discuss their targets clearly and are developing an understanding of how they can improve their work. This is complemented well by displays around the attractive classrooms which show pupils how they are performing in relation to their targets. Teachers are developing their ability to use targets in planning for individuals and groups and to refer to them more effectively in their marking.

The school has received good support from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner, which has enabled it to develop more effective planning for improvement, with more regular and more focused monitoring and evaluation. Although funding issues have altered the way in which this support is provided, the school is now better placed to take the work forward itself. The headteacher has set up more rigorous systems to monitor the progress of groups and individuals and has enabled staff to take a more active role in leading and managing the school, with a clearer sense of their responsibilities and accountabilities. Governors are developing their understanding of how to provide effective challenge well. Though the pace of change in terms of achievement has not been rapid, firm foundations have been laid which are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009

- Raise standards and achievement particularly in writing by improving the challenge and pace of learning in lessons.
- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of their targets and how to achieve them, and that teachers make full use of these during lessons and when marking pupils' work.
- Improve provision in the Early Year Foundation Stage by providing more exciting activities which make better use of the outdoor areas and increase the opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves.