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Mrs Eelin Megson
Headteacher
Linthwaite Ardron CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School
Church Lane
Linthwaite
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD7 5TA

Dear Mrs Megson

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Linthwaite Ardron CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 November 2010 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please can you pass on my gratitude to the Chair of the Governing Body and the representatives of the local authority for taking time to meet with me.

Since the inspection, there has been significant turnover in staffing and in the leadership of the school. The deputy headteacher, a senior teacher and a class teacher left, the special educational needs coordinator retired and other teachers were absent for significant periods of time. The curriculum leader, at the time of this inspection, was the acting deputy headteacher and one of the middle leaders took up position as an acting member of the senior leadership team.

As a result of the inspection on 29 and 30 March 2010, 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 is making **good** progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.

As predicted, attainment fell significantly in the national assessments for pupils in Year 6, particularly in mathematics. These results are yet to be validated but the school's own data indicate that in last year's Year 6 and in a small number of other classes, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics was not as high as it should have been. However, attainment rose significantly in most year groups most notably in Years 1, 2 and 3 and there has been a significant rise in attainment in

mathematics since the inspection. This is due to a mixture of factors including better teaching; increased consistency of approach to teaching calculations between the classes; the use of an analysis of pupils' errors to plan lessons and catch-up sessions; as well as targeted deployment of teaching assistants and teachers to tackle underachievement.

The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved, as has the progress pupils make. During this inspection there was no inadequate teaching and around two thirds of lessons were good or better because pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils were active and engrossed in their learning tasks and teachers used time well to ensure that pupils spent most of the lesson working rather than sitting listening. More-able pupils are making accelerated progress. They have more time in lessons to reflect on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. They also have more time to consider teachers' marking and comments during lessons and comments from their peers. Pupils also have increased opportunity to draft and to think about their work before committing their ideas to their workbooks.

Staff have increased their expectations of pupils and have a greater understanding of the level each pupil is at in most subjects. Senior leaders have started to use half-termly meetings with individual teachers to assess each pupil and to identify how well pupils are progressing against their challenging targets. This has increased each staff member's focus on how each individual's progress can be maximised. There is still some way to go to translate this improved knowledge into planning activities and learning targets in lessons that will move each pupil on to their next level. Another improvement resulting from a greater knowledge of pupils' capabilities is teachers' use of questioning. In the best lessons, they target questions to pupils that will make them think, reason, apply and explain their thinking. In a very few lessons, each pupil did not have to answer many questions. In these lessons the questions were low level which meant they did not extend their knowledge or their thinking.

The school improvement plan is also the post-Ofsted inspection action plan. Consequently, the number of priorities has reduced and there is a sharper focus to school improvement. The success criteria, however, are still too imprecise and vague. This hampers the ability of school managers and external evaluators to measure the school's success.

The local authority's statement of action to improve the overall effectiveness of the school did not meet requirements. It has subsequently been amended and is now fit for purpose, although some success criteria are still too imprecise and difficult to measure. Overall the local authority support is satisfactory. An experienced National Leader in Education has been working closely with the school. As a result, there is increased capacity to improve. Since Easter, local authority staffing and finance departments have supported the school through an extremely turbulent period. This support has been invaluable in securing and stabilising staffing. There has also been some effective support from consultants and advisors who have provided individual

and group training. Opportunities to work with and visit other schools have also been effective in helping teachers to improve the quality of learning in lessons.

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

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010.

- Improve progress for pupils at Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that any inadequate teaching is improved as quickly as possible and that teaching in all classes is at least good by the end of the autumn term 2010
 - monitoring more closely the half-termly progress made by each pupil and taking swifter action when this is below expectation
 - reducing the amount of whole-class teaching so that learning can be more accurately matched to pupils' different levels of ability.
- Raise attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
 - evaluating current approaches to improving mathematics in order to increase the pace of change
 - checking more closely the consistency of teaching, learning and progress between classes.
- Raise the attainment of the more-able pupils from Reception to Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that all staff have sufficiently high expectations and understanding of their capabilities
 - planning learning activities that have a clearly specified target at an appropriate level to move the learning forward
 - providing time every day for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and improved.
- Reduce the number of priorities for improvement and define more accurately measurable success criteria in order to maximise the impact of change.