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25 November 2010

Mr Leon Myers  
Headteacher  
Swinemoor Primary School  
Burden Road  
Beverley  
HU17 9LW

Dear Mr Myers

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Swinemoor Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I hope you will pass on my thanks to the parents and governors who spoke to me and also to all the pupils and staff for their inspiring singing.

Significant changes have been made since the previous inspection in 2009. These include your appointment as permanent headteacher in January 2010 and the completion of the school's amalgamation as a primary school on a single site in September this year. Redundancies resulting from declining pupil numbers led to the departure of seven members of staff last July, which has reduced the budget deficit.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 April 2009, 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 shows clear improvement. The difference shows in the work and attitudes of pupils currently in Key Stage 2. A comparison of their work with work done this time last year shows that higher expectations are now the norm. For example, pupils are writing at greater length and with more control and care. Pupils feel well supported to succeed: they understand their individual targets in English and mathematics and how well they are doing with them. The changes which have led to this improvement began during the last school year, in time to bring about a dramatic rise in the national Key Stage 2 test results.

September 2010



Attainment was broadly average for the first time in recent years. In the two previous years, 2008 and 2009, pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6 had fallen well below expectations, but in 2010 it was well above. Attendance is higher now than it was at the same point last year. Behaviour has improved and the use of exclusion has significantly reduced.

As the school realises, these improvements need to be sustained and built on. Leaders and managers are monitoring the progress of pupils closely. A watchful eye is kept on how different groups of pupils are doing, so that none are left behind. The development plan is well focused on raising attainment further by improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum so they fit different pupils' needs. The quality of teaching and assessment has been monitored and supported rigorously with the help of the local authority. Monitoring has identified considerable improvement over the year, although leaders recognise that the quality of learning and progress in lessons is not yet consistently good. Inspection evidence confirms that the way teachers structure pupils' learning and use assessment, including marking and feedback, has improved in line with the school's own evaluation. This has been key to improving progress and behaviour. However, teachers could at times do more to increase the pace and depth of learning. Questioning and group work which get every pupil thinking, self-evaluation and better use of other adults in the classroom are some examples. Senior leaders evaluate teaching and learning rigorously and have clear and suitable plans for guiding its further improvement.

Much is being done to enrich the curriculum. This includes extending pupils' understanding of the world beyond their own community. The school invests much effort in themed events, visits and competitions. Learning feels relevant, say the pupils and parents spoken to. Homework is set regularly; something parents say helps them to support basic skills. Some older pupils spoke about their high aspirations and how school is giving them chances to 'learn from experts' and show what they can do. Pupils take justifiable pride in their achievements this year, whether in singing on public platforms, creating their Mexican Exhibition, or taking responsibilities for helping others. While the school has not prioritised learning about the diversity represented in the United Kingdom, what it has done has had a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes in this respect as well as others. Those spoken to are interested in and reflective about different ways of life.

The way the school has been led has had a galvanising affect over the past year. The headteacher together with the senior team have effectively conveyed high aspirations and given governors, staff and pupils a clear sense of direction. Higher expectations have rapidly had a positive impact on pupils' previously low attainment. Improvements in English, mathematics and science mean that the school met most of its challenging targets last year, marking a turning point. The school has a clear understanding of where it could do better, so that, for example, more pupils reach higher levels in writing. Longer term planning to move towards good overall effectiveness is streamlined and realistic, as well as ambitious. The governing body has a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school so that it is

better involved in monitoring and evaluating improvement. Staff absences have reduced sharply. The staff have weathered considerable change to form a united and positive team which shows strong commitment to new ways of working. Thus the school's capacity to improve has improved well.

The local authority has contributed well to the school's improvement. The close involvement of the School Improvement Partner and other officers has helped the school work out what needed to improve and increased its capacity to make changes. For example, a seconded associate senior team member has worked with each teacher as they reflect on and refine teaching strategies. Successive monitoring visits have helped the school see clearly what it has achieved and what it needs to do next.

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

Susan Bowles  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2009**

- Build more consistently across the school on children's successful learning in the Reception class to raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Monitor teachers' marking and assessment of pupils' progress more closely to check that teaching matches accurately all their different learning needs.
- Extend the curricular coverage of diverse communities to include more about the cultural, faith and ethnic diversity of the United Kingdom.