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Mrs Theresa Siverns
Headteacher
Mallard Primary School
Cedar Road
Balby
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN4 9HU

Dear Mrs Siverns

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Mallard 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. Please pass on my thanks also to the Chair of the Governing Body and the pupils, who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 11 December 2008, 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.

Pupils' attainment declined in the year after the last inspection, but has improved since and is broadly average overall. The unvalidated data for 2010 for Key Stage 2 suggest that pupils' attainment has improved significantly over the 2009 test results. There are also indications that pupils are beginning to make better rates of progress.

The improvement is the result of better teaching. The quality of teaching seen during in the lessons observed was satisfactory. The pupils told the inspector that they enjoyed lessons, describing them as, 'Fun' and 'exciting'. Their enjoyment was evident in the lessons seen during the inspection. Older pupils said that lessons were getting better and this view was echoed by the governing body, based in part on the views of parents and carers. The pupils' increased enjoyment is the result of many more interesting topics and engaging activities in lessons, particularly in science, and

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the pupils were able to recall interesting experiments and problem solving work easily. The pupils responded well in the lessons seen and this was the result also of good relationships with the teachers. Consequently in these lessons the pupils' behaviour was good.

Although the pupils find the topics interesting and the activities engaging, the tasks given to them are still not always sufficiently demanding. The inspector found limited evidence that work was being varied to meet the different needs of the pupils. In one of the better lessons seen, the teacher used questions well to prompt more considered answers from the pupils and, based on what was apparent about their understanding, asked them to undertake more difficult problems. The use of interesting approaches to teaching has become more consistent and the inspector observed few lessons that were dominated by teachers talking, although the pupils said that there were still quite a few occasions when this happened.

The changes to lessons have contributed to improved attitudes to learning. There is also now a good range of trips and extra-curricular experiences for the pupils. The experiences have a major impact on the pupils' attitudes and learning. The pupils talk about these experiences excitedly, in detail and enthusiastically.

The school has improved its capacity for making improvements steadily, securely and sustainably. There is a very clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and the rates of pupils' progress, reflected in well-considered and intelligent use of good quality data about pupils' attainment and detailed information about the barriers to individuals' learning, so that these can be removed. Every member of staff is engaged in this process. The staff is gaining a progressively more detailed understanding of the links between the progress their pupils are making, how their pupils are learning and the approaches to teaching needed to improve these. The work is supported by effective professional development and a greater emphasis on teamwork, making better use of existing expertise and enabling members of staff to develop their skills. The school has sought out and made effective use of external support to make the improvements. The staff exhibits a healthy team spirit and the school is more open to and engaged with parents and carers and the local community.

The monitoring of the main areas of the school's work is now thorough and secure, but not yet embedded for all aspects. The role of middle leaders in evaluating particular aspects of the curriculum is emerging. The governing body has also yet to be involved fully in evaluating the work of the school critically. There has been a significant turnover in staffing since the last inspection, which has meant that the school is yet to enjoy a period of sustained continuity sufficient to embed all developments fully. Several managers have taken over key roles relatively recently and the senior leadership team has itself been in its current form for one year only. The initiatives they are taking are well directed and bringing about the necessary changes, but some are quite recent and there has not yet been sufficient time for

them to have had the full impact. Despite the improvements noted above, a securely upward trend in attainment and pupils' progress is not yet evident.

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

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in (insert month and year)

- Ensure that all pupils are always challenged in English and mathematics, especially the more able.
- Improve the consistency of teaching to that of the best.
- Enliven and enrich the curriculum to add excitement and enjoyment, increase interest and accelerate progress.
- Monitor rigorously and regularly all aspects of the school's work, making better use of tracking information to help drive up standards.