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Elizabeth Filer
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Filer

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bassett Green Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 January 2011, 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 staff, pupils and governors for their help. I would like to thank the School Improvement Partner for coming into school to meet me.

Since the inspection there have been changes in teachers and the governing body has a new chair.

As a result of the inspection on 17–18 November 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.

Attainment remains below national expectations but the legacy of underachievement in English and mathematics has been halted and there is an improving trend. In the most recent school tests for 2011, pupil attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average. However, from pupils' exceptionally low starting points this represents good progress. Carefully planned interventions such as in mathematics have resulted in a significant improvement in the performance of girls in this subject. Similarly a range of targeted interventions have resulted in the gap in performance of different groups being reduced, such as the gap between the performance of pupils whose first language is English and those pupils who have English as a second language. Pupils



make good and sometimes better progress in lessons. For instance, pupils demonstrate their confident use of similes in creating descriptive writing about a story setting. One pupil wrote, 'The sun is like sparkling diamonds covered in orange powders.' The range of writing now covered through the improved curriculum means that pupils are enthusiastic to write and can apply their skills in different contexts. During an English lesson one pupil combined elements from a history topic on the Tudors with descriptive writing to form a well-developed narrative. Progress in mathematics is now good. Pupils enthusiastically solve problems set for them. They work well together and it is this good attitude to learning that underpins their success. More-able pupils diligently work with sustained concentration and the quality of their work is good. Pupils can explain the methods they use to solve mathematical problems such as working out how to divide numbers that have remainders. Consequently all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good or better progress in relation to their starting points.

Teachers' individual daily planning meets the needs of groups and individual pupils very well. Effective teaching in English and mathematics is underpinned by teachers' good subject knowledge. Lessons are exciting, challenging and move along at a good pace. A range of learning techniques and high quality resources are used to engage pupils. For example, the areas set up to reflect topics, such as a space station for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, stimulate their imagination. During the inspection pupils in the nurture room were observed carefully working together as young archaeologists preparing fossils in stones. In this way the teaching of science is delivered through the improved curriculum. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities because tasks planned have small steps which lead to success.

Pupils respond well to teachers' marking and report that it tells them how well they are doing. The consistency of marking is a strength throughout the school. Pupils know their targets for improvement and their involvement in assessing their own work helps them know what the next steps are. Occasionally, not enough attention is paid to giving pupils the opportunity to change and refine their work. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in lessons as a result of the individualised work set and the skilful support from teaching assistants.

The relentless drive and ambition of the headteacher and senior leadership team in accelerating pupil progress are unquestionable. Their impressive focus on school improvement has been successfully cascaded down to all staff leading to high levels of accountability for pupil progress. Decisive action has been taken to quickly eradicate any weaknesses in teaching so that all groups and individuals make good progress. Regular pupil progress meetings have ensured that pupils' performance is tracked systematically and those in danger of not making progress are identified and actions put in place to meet their needs. The actions taken by leaders and managers to improve low attendance are having a positive impact, such as the attendance project which supports and challenges pupils and their families. As a result, the



poorest attendees have dramatically improved their attendance. Attendance targets set have been met and leaders and managers are constantly setting higher attendance targets and working closely with partner professionals to improve attendance and punctuality.

The governing body now has a much sharper understanding of its role and the challenges that face the school. Together with senior leaders the governors have met the target date set and ensured that the school now fully meets the requirements for community cohesion. A set of planned actions have been taken such as Black history month and a fairground project, which have developed pupils' understanding and tolerance of different cultural backgrounds. Governors have restructured their roles and responsibilities to link with subjects and consequently have a more clearly defined input into monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. However, occasionally there is a missed opportunity to ensure school improvement issues take precedence in discussions at full governing body meetings.

The school has made effective use of the good quality support from the local authority. Training for governors has been particularly useful in empowering them to ask questions and challenge the school further. Discussions with the School Improvement Partner have constantly focused senior leaders and governors on the task of raising standards. This has enabled them to take appropriate actions and build a good capacity for further improvement.

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

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
 - planning explicit learning intentions for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring pupils understand their targets and the next steps in their learning
 - making sure that marking and feedback to pupils are consistently good to support the pupils' understanding of how they can improve their work.

- Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, so that by 2010 the attendance target is met and punctuality has improved significantly.

- Improve the effectiveness of governors by:
 - systematically monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school.

- Promote community cohesion by improving pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles, through the development of links with wider national and international communities and evaluating the impact of this work by the end of 2010.