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Mr D O'Sullivan
The Headteacher
Coombe Road Primary School
Coombe Road
Brighton
East Sussex
BN2 4ED

Dear Mr O'Sullivan

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Coombe Road Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 February 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 the children, staff and chair of governors who were so welcoming.

There have been very few changes in the school's context since it was last inspected. The school is a well-established community school and admits pupils from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including statements of special educational needs. Pupil mobility remains high with significant numbers of pupils changing schools in different year groups.

As a result of the inspection on 13 and 14 October 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.

My visits to a sample of lessons indicated that pupils' achievement overall has improved and is now good. This is supported and confirmed by the school's thorough analysis of information on pupils' performance. Attainment still varies with the different nature of each year group, but is rising steadily and is now satisfactory overall. As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly a strong focus on assessment, pupils' learning and progress are now good. For example, in



2010 almost all Year 6 pupils made at least the progress they should and the current Year 6 pupils are well on course to exceed their challenging performance targets. More able pupils made good progress and the numbers of pupils reaching higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2010.

A calm and positive learning environment exists throughout the school. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good and pupils work and play well together. Robust and thorough systems for monitoring absence are improving attendance and more pupils are coming to school regularly. Pupils are keen to do well and are enthusiastic about their learning, especially where the tasks are interesting and engaging. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are clear about what it is they are expected to learn. As a result, the quality and standard of pupils' writing has improved, with pupils able to write in a range of styles and use some exciting vocabulary. There is a growing understanding amongst the staff of how their children learn best and teachers are flexible in looking for strategies to make this happen. This is supported by developments to the curriculum that are increasingly successful in building on previous learning and using skills from other areas.

Improvements in teaching are well supported by the marking, assessment and target setting systems now in place. Outcomes are used effectively to maintain an overview of whole-school, class and individual performance. Pupils receive good feedback about the quality of their work, but are less clear about the standard of their work and how it might be improved. Teachers are making much better use of the outcomes of assessment to adapt and plan future lessons, as well as identifying pupils who need extra help. This is a particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive provision that is supportive and appropriate to their needs and so they make good progress.

The headteacher and effective senior leadership team, supported by members of the governing body, are united in their commitment to helping all the pupils in their care to achieve their best. The staff team is firmly behind this vision and this creates a very caring, supportive family atmosphere where all feel valued. Thorough self-evaluation draws on a wide range of information to give a clear picture of strengths as well as a focus on key priorities for improvement. Local authority advisers have provided very good support for school improvement which has been carefully tailored to the school's needs. The school appreciates the challenge to improve provided by the local authority consultants and their School Improvement Partner.

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

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Ensure greater impact from the school's self-evaluation activities through a sharper focus on measuring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing, especially in Years 3 to 6, through:
 - improving the school's curricular provision for the progressive development of skills to increase the challenge for pupils, especially those who are more able.
- Accelerating progress by:
 - improving the match of tasks to different groups of pupils
 - clarifying more consistently the criteria for good work
 - providing better feedback from marking about the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Improve the school's attendance rate to at least average by concerted action to reduce the number of persistent absentees.