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Mr J Hartley  
Executive Headteacher  
Trosnant Junior School and BESD Unit  
Stockheath Lane  
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PO9 3BD

Dear Mr Hartley

**Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Trosnant Junior School and BESD Unit**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 February 2011 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils and staff for their contribution to this monitoring inspection.

Following the section 5 inspection that gave the school a notice to improve, the school became federated with the on-site Trosnant Infant School under a single governing body and one headteacher, known as the executive headteacher. Since the autumn of 2010, there have been substantial staff changes at the school. An existing member of staff was appointed as the new deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator from the infant school took on the same role for the junior school. Other staff took on the same role for both schools, including the home-school link worker, who has a key role in helping to raise levels of attendance. Furthermore, four teachers have left the school; six teachers have been appointed, of which three are newly qualified and in their second year of teaching. One of these teachers is on maternity leave and is being covered by a long-term supply teacher. Currently, 40% of the pupils at the school are on the special educational needs register.

As a result of the inspection on 7 and 8 July 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 satisfactory and improving progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The pupils I spoke to were overwhelmingly positive about how much they enjoy coming to school. They commented on the improvements they have noticed to the quality of their lessons and to the way pupils behave in school and in the

playground. Although levels of attainment are still low, particularly in Year 6, levels of achievement are improving. As a result, significantly more pupils across the school are in line to reach age-related expectations. The school's data show that pupils make more rapid progress in English than in mathematics. Leaders and managers have not collated and analysed comparative data about the progress being made by boys compared to girls and by pupils of different ability during the course of the academic year. Staff have higher expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a better understanding of their needs and how they can support them. This is a result of better leadership and management of this area, and improved teaching and learning for the most vulnerable pupils. Consequently, these pupils make better progress.

The school has made good progress in raising levels of attendance. This has been achieved by staff and key leaders working closely and helpfully with parents and carers, and by providing meaningful incentives to pupils.

The quality of teaching, although much improved, is still satisfactory. Teachers provide more challenging work for pupils, but this is not consistently good throughout the school. Teachers plan work for pupils that is usually pitched at the right level. However, in some lessons the structure and lack of rigorous assessment during lessons limits the impact that teaching has on learning. Where teaching is good, such as in a literacy lesson in Year 5, where pupils were learning about persuasive writing, learning was put into a meaningful context. In this lesson, pupils were drafting letters, for example, to a celebrity to persuade them to visit their school. The teacher used questions well to check pupils' understanding of how to structure sentences and use grammar and punctuation correctly. Where teaching was seen to be less effective, pupils were more focused on the activities than on the learning and skills they were meant to be developing. The pace of learning in these lessons was reduced because there was insufficient scaffolding or support for some pupils. As a result, pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.

A range of strategies, including a sharper focus on teaching letters and sounds, is having a positive impact on raising standards of reading and writing, but this is not firmly embedded throughout the school. Subject leaders have identified opportunities to write across the curriculum and this is leading to more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. Although improving, pupils would still benefit from practising how to structure sentences. All adults observed during this monitoring inspection modelled correct speech and writing. Pupils are provided with opportunities to practise their handwriting, but do not make enough use of what they know about the correct formation of letters and cursive script in their general work. Marking is developing well and teachers encourage pupils to use checklists to help them to self- and peer-assess. However, pupils still do not make sufficient use of these strategies to help them to improve their work as well as they could.

The school's capacity to sustain improvement has been enhanced by the federation and by the training and development opportunities provided to support teaching staff as well as the executive headteacher. The new governing body is developing its role well and challenges the school appropriately about progress and attainment.

The strong leadership of the executive headteacher has contributed to the development of a clear vision for the school and a shared sense of purpose. While improvement planning communicates a clear sense of direction, the higher expectations of the more-able pupils are not always made sufficiently explicit. There is regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by senior leaders and this has a positive impact. However, leaders and managers do not record the learning and progress being made in lessons by different groups of pupils or the levels of attainment in classes. Self-evaluation, undertaken largely by senior leaders, is rigorous and, as a result, the school has identified the correct priorities for improvement.

Health and safety in the school continue to be a high priority and pupils report that they feel very safe in school. However, the single central record is not reviewed or updated regularly or rigorously enough to ensure that administrative tasks are always completed in full.

The statement of action submitted by the local authority was judged to be fit for purpose. There has been good and effective partnership working between school and local authority officers. Teaching and support staff as well as the executive headteacher have all embraced the good guidance and support from advisers, inspectors and consultants. This has helped them all to improve their practice.

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

Gehane Gordelier

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise Attainment in writing, by July 2011, by ensuring:
  - adults model grammatically correct speech and writing
  - opportunities for pupils to write are routinely included in all subjects
  - pupils are helped to improve their handwriting
  - pupils are taught to structure sentences properly.
  
- Improve progress, especially of the most-able pupils, by July 2011, by ensuring:
  - teaching is consistently challenging
  - work is matched to the learning needs of all pupils
  - adults check that pupils are purposefully engaged in learning and understand what they are supposed to be doing
  - assessment is accurate and used to pinpoint pupils' progress and to plan the next steps in learning.
  
- Improve attendance by impressing on pupils and families the importance of not taking holidays in term time and of regular attendance so that pupils make sufficient progress in their learning.