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Mrs K Offer
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Offer

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hawthorns First School, Durrington

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the vice chair of the governing body, your special educational needs coordinator and the group of pupils, all of whom spent time talking to me about the school.

One member of staff is currently on maternity leave. A newly qualified teacher is covering her class on a part-time basis as part of a job share. The school has gained an additional parent governor, and the current chair of the governing body was appointed in December 2009. The school has gained more pupils from out of the catchment area. A new School Improvement Partner is due to begin working with the school this term.

As a result of the inspection in March 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 inadequate progress in making improvements, and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has made some progress in the last 18 months. However, the progress made in the key issues for improvement has either been too slow or not sustained. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall by the end of Year 3, although by the end of Year 2, levels of attainment in 2009 and 2010 were below the national average for reading, writing and mathematics, and in 2010 too few pupils attained



the higher Level 3 in all three subjects. Some of the most vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least satisfactory and at times good progress. This is because of the quality of intervention and additional support they receive, particularly in mathematics. However, the rate of progress made by other pupils is still no better than satisfactory overall because of weaknesses in teaching and learning. Although, teachers know what constitutes good teaching they have yet to ensure they embed agreed strategies in their daily practice. Strengths observed in teaching include opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and to experience new learning in a meaningful and enjoyable context. However, teachers are still not checking pupils' progress and learning sufficiently well or frequently enough during lessons. This is leading to limited challenge for some of the most able, and insufficient strategies to support those who at times find learning difficult. There are also missed opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support and enhance their learning. Furthermore, in too many of the lessons observed, teachers did not encourage pupils to practise and develop their basic skills of reading and writing sufficiently well.

While there are examples in the school where the quality of teachers' marking is diagnostic and good, this is still too inconsistent. As a result, too much of teachers' marking does not help to move pupils on with their learning. Some of the pupils say they would welcome more written feedback about how well they are doing and what they could do to improve further. The school has improved and enriched its curriculum and this is leading to pupils enjoying the school and their lessons. The school sets targets for all pupils and tracks and monitors their progress on a regular basis, but these data are not used as well as they could be to help drive up standards. This is partly because teachers are not always held sufficiently to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils in their class and because action and improvement planning do not cross-reference or make enough use of this information. Furthermore, too many pupils are still not aware of their learning targets. This is all impeding the school's efforts in trying to help pupils to achieve as well as they can.

The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school continues to be good. The school celebrates good attendance and has been successful in reducing the level of persistent absentees. Absences are followed up on a daily basis, and the school is working hard with parents to help and encourage them to bring their children to school. However, despite signs of improvement last year, levels of attendance are still too low and this is also having a negative impact on the learning and progress of some pupils.

Leaders and managers at different levels in the school are developing and improving their roles, but have yet to work as effectively as they could as a team to help to secure sustained improvements in the school. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored on a termly basis, and more regularly where needed. The school's evidence shows that teaching and learning were stronger last year than is currently



the case. However, lesson observations do not always focus enough on levels of attainment or the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school development plan, although focused on the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection, has not helped to drive and embed improvement securely enough. This is because some of the supporting documentation such as subject action plans do not specify sufficiently well how actions will impact on pupils' learning and how progress will be measured.

The governing body are developing their role well and are beginning to hold the school more closely to account for the progress made by pupils. However, they have yet to ensure a systematic approach in checking that all statutory requirements are met in full, particularly in terms of communicating to parents and carers the impact of key policies.

The quality and impact of the support provided to the school by the local authority and other partners has been variable. The inclusion support team have provided valuable inset that increased staff's ability of providing vulnerable pupils with appropriate and targeted support. The school has also benefited from support in developing and improving its curriculum and teaching techniques. However, some of this work has yet to impact sufficiently on teaching and learning. The lack of consistency in the support provided to the school by the education welfare service has proved unhelpful in enabling the school to raise levels of attendance sufficiently.

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 March 2009

- Ensure consistently good teaching and learning across Years 1 to 3 in order to accelerate progress beyond its present overall satisfactory level.

- Make sure that full use is made of learning targets, marking and feedback to give pupils focused information about how to improve their work.

- Increase attendance levels so that all pupils gain as much as they possibly can from their time at school.