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8 December 2010

Mr Ducker
The Headteacher
David Livingstone Primary School
Northwood Road
Thornton Heath
Surrey
CR7 8HX

Dear Mr Ducker

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of David Livingstone Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please thank the pupils, staff, chair of governors and local authority adviser who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection, there has been some significant restructuring as a result of the school working in very close partnership with a local national support school. The substantive headteacher has been on compassionate long-term sick leave since April 2010. In May 2010, the headteacher of Gonville Primary School (a national support school), who is a National Leader of Education, was brought in as an executive headteacher. He is supported by two co-heads of school, one who was previously an assistant headteacher at Gonville Primary, and the other who was deputy headteacher at David Livingstone. A few teachers from Gonville Primary have also been brought in to work in a full-time capacity at the school.

As a result of the inspection on 1 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

There have been dramatic improvements in pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in 2010. Although broadly average in 2008, there was a big dip in pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2009. Progress in mathematics and

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English from pupils' below average starting points was inadequate. As a result of consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6, supported by a range of well-targeted interventions, this decline was dramatically reversed in 2010. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and English was well above average by the end of Year 6 and progress over time for this cohort was good. However, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 has been consistently below average and progress inadequate for several years. This is where the new leadership team has been, rightly, targeting much of its action. As a result of focused support and successful interventions, attainment has improved and pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve at least in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

In lessons, teachers are demonstrating their improved use of ongoing assessment by good questioning techniques to probe pupils' understanding. In a numeracy lesson for example, the teacher's skilful prompting enabled pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to generate good questions about the identity of a mystery number. There was a strong problem-solving dimension to all the numeracy lessons observed, for example when pupils used model clocks and information about train journeys to calculate elapsed time. Lessons are well planned and pupils are given varied activities to keep them interested and engaged. For instance, Year 6 pupils developed their speaking and listening skills well during a lively literacy session in which they confidently argued for and against the motion 'This House believes that David Livingstone's timetable should be changed'. Pupils speak positively of the recent changes in the way teachers teach. One pupil reflected the views of many when he said, 'Lessons are now more fun because teachers involve us more and use the smartboard to explain things, so I learn better.'

Effective assessment has given the leadership team a very clear picture of progress, so that it can target those pupils who need help. There is still some variability in how well these assessments are used in each class to ensure that work meets all abilities and needs. This depends on the expertise of the teacher, but good progress is being made towards eliminating this variability. Although literacy and numeracy skills are well taught in discrete lessons, the school rightly recognises that not enough is planned to embed these basic skills across the curriculum.

The close partnership with a local national support school, Gonville Primary, brokered by the local authority, has had a strong impact on raising expectations and improving the quality of provision. The work of the executive headteacher, who is a National Leader of Education, has been instrumental in bringing about a demonstrable cultural shift. He is supported by a strong and decisive leadership team that has demonstrated its commitment to improving the school. Astute appointments to key positions have had a positive impact on improving behaviour and attendance. Pupils' behaviour is now consistently good and attendance is above average.

The good impact of the partnership is also seen in the collaborative approach to curriculum planning across the two schools. Curriculum, teaching and leadership

expertise is shared well across the two sites and is successful in further enriching pupils' learning experience. The quality of teaching is closely monitored by school leaders and challenging targets set as a result of effective self-evaluation. Regular professional development, coupled with targeted coaching and mentoring, has resulted in clear improvements in the quality of teaching. Parents are very supportive of this partnership model that is working so well for them. For example, the school has benefited from new technology resources in all classrooms which are being used to make learning more interactive and enjoyable. The developments that have taken place and the sustained level of improvement in pupils' attainment and progress all indicate a school that is moving forward well.

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

Nasim Butt
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2008

- Ensure that, in all lessons, pupils are given varied activities that keep them interested and engaged in order to raise all teaching to the level of the best.
- Raise standards in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities for problem solving and practical activities in order to develop and apply their mathematics skills and knowledge.