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Ms T Fielding  
Abbeys Primary School  
Melrose Avenue  
Bletchley  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire  
MK3 6PS

Dear Ms Fielding

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Abbeys Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 December 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, parents and carers, Chair of Governors and local authority School Improvement Partner who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection, there has been some restructuring of the leadership team. A substantive deputy headteacher, who was previously a resident consultant for numeracy, was appointed in May 2010. The assistant headteacher post has been provisionally suspended. Four lead learners were appointed at middle leadership level in September 2010. Pupil groupings have also been reorganised so that there are now three mixed Year 1/2 classes, three Year 3/4 and three mixed Year 5/6 classes across the school. Six new teachers joined the school in September 2010, five of whom are newly qualified teachers.

As a result of the inspection on 27 April 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

After a turbulent period of consistently low attainment and inadequate progress in mathematics, English and science at Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment rose in summer 2010, although it was still below average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, the school's accurate tracking information shows that

there has been a dramatic rise in pupils' attainment over the past three months as a result of clear and decisive action by school leaders. Good teaching, supported by very well targeted interventions, has ensured that the large majority of pupils are making accelerated progress in mathematics, English and science across all year groups. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve slightly below national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, and in line with age-related expectations by the end of Year 6. Given that pupils enter the school with attainment that is below average, this indicates good achievement.

The proportion of good teaching has gone up and there is now a much sharper focus on the use of assessment. Whole-school analysis is evaluated carefully and intervention for any pupils who are seen to be falling behind is rapid and effective. In all the mixed-age classes, a good proportion of pupils have made rapid progress in their writing, which can be demonstrated clearly from the regular assessments that are made each half term. The quality of handwriting and presentation in pupils' books has improved significantly as a result of the consistent enforcement and monitoring of agreed school policies. Assessment is used effectively in many lessons to challenge the more-able pupils and to target those pupils who need help. For example, peer assessment was used effectively in a Year 5/6 literacy lesson in which pupils used their steps to success criteria to evaluate a piece of narrative writing. However, school leaders recognise that there is still some variability in how well teachers use assessment information to ensure that work meets all abilities and needs, and this is a key priority they are addressing.

There is a good structure to all lessons with clear learning intentions which most teachers skilfully unpack. The mental starters in numeracy lessons have their own distinct objective and this has sharpened the focus for these sessions. Year 1/2 pupils successfully reinforced their understanding of number bonds partly because the aims of the session were so precise. The coaching and modelling by resident consultants for literacy, numeracy and science have had a significant impact on teachers' understanding of assessment, learning and progress in these key areas. In addition, there have been dramatic improvements in the quality of marking. All teachers highlight strengths and identify the next steps pupils need to take to improve. Time is built into lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' diagnostic comments. The use of photographic evidence in pupils' books to capture their achievement motivates pupils and is well appreciated by parents and carers.

The local authority's revised statement of action is effective and fit for purpose. With clear targets and milestones up until July 2011, it has enabled school leaders to focus their attention on accelerating pupils' progress by setting challenging targets and rigorously monitoring the quality of provision, especially teaching. The provision of resident consultants for literacy, numeracy and science last summer, working closely with teachers, has had a demonstrable impact on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. The Governing Body is better equipped to hold the school to account as a result of the effective training provided by the local authority. The School Improvement Partner has worked well with the headteacher to clarify

expectations and help raise standards in teaching. The good impact of their work is seen in the improved quality of teacher assessment, coupled with the provision of good written feedback to pupils on how to improve further.

The headteacher and her deputy have been leading the school remarkably well with a relentless focus on raising pupils' achievement. School leaders recognise that more work needs to be done in working with individual teachers to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better. There has been a strong determination to turn the school round and transform pupils' life chances. Lead learners are also closely involved in purposeful self-evaluation activity, for example the regular and detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, the outcomes of which have led to impressive improvements in the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, attainment is now rising rapidly and a culture of continuous improvement is being successfully embedded at all levels.

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 April 2010

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 1 and 2 by April 2011 by:
  - ensuring key skills are taught consistently well
  - improving standards of presentation of pupils' work
  - helping pupils learn to use a wide range of vocabulary to enrich their writing
  - improving spelling by ensuring younger pupils regularly practise words they find difficult
  - improving pupils' pencil grips and the quality of their handwriting
  - improving the mental and oral starters to mathematics lessons.
  
- Ensure that all teaching is of consistently good quality by April 2011 by:
  - ensuring teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan lessons that match pupils' needs and provide appropriate challenge to groups within the school
  - ensuring pace, challenge and high expectations are features of every lesson so that all groups of pupils are challenged
  - helping pupils know how to improve through consistently good quality marking.
  
- Increase the rigour of monitoring and evaluation by April 2011 and ensure leaders are effective in checking teaching and learning and supporting their development so that pupils make securely good progress.