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14 January 2011

Mrs A Norris  
Executive headteacher  
Oakwood Primary School  
Pendeen Crescent  
Southway  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL6 6QS

Dear Mrs Norris

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Oakwood Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please convey my gratitude to the members of staff and pupils who met with me as well as to the governors and the School Improvement Partner.

Following the departure of the school's team headteacher to take up a new headship, the governing body reviewed and reshaped the leadership of the Southernway Federation of which this school is a part. From September 2010, you moved from your previous post as team headteacher of the other school in the federation and took up your appointment as executive headteacher for both schools. A head of site and an assistant headteacher were also appointed for each school from this date.

As a result of the inspection on 30 November–1 December 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.

The school has focused sharply and appropriately on improving pupils' progress in mathematics in order to raise standards. A careful analysis of gaps in pupils' learning revealed weaknesses in pupils' mental mathematics and in calculation that were



addressed in a detailed action plan. Support from local authority consultants has been carefully tailored to need. More intensive in the early stages, it has been designed to develop the school's capacity to lead improvement for itself. The subject leader's effectiveness has developed well. He has introduced new resources and devised a new approach to calculation in order to establish greater consistency in practice across the school. Careful checks have been undertaken on the impact of actions taken through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books. Further detailed improvements planned for the current school year are designed to build on the advances made so far.

Much attention has been given to improving the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, beginning with establishing a shared understanding of key features of good and outstanding practice. Specific areas for improvement have been identified through lesson observations and followed up in subsequent visits to classrooms. Teachers have also had the opportunity to observe each other and to share good practice. This has been complemented by a sharp and systematic focus on the progress made by pupils in each class. The school's data indicate that teaching is improving as a result of the actions taken. In lessons observed, ensuring that tasks matched pupils' needs, particularly those of the more able, was a notable feature, as was the attention given to addressing weaknesses in pupils' understanding that had emerged in previous lessons. Pupils behaved and concentrated well. Those interviewed said that mathematics lessons were now more fun. They reported that teachers checked on their learning in lessons and they appreciated the extra help provided where necessary.

As a result of the activities to improve progress in mathematics and the quality of teaching, there has been some significant improvement in attainment and achievement. The federation did not participate in the national tests for Year 6 in 2010. Teachers' assessments indicate an improvement on the attainment and progress shown by the English and mathematics tests in 2009. The proportion reaching the expected standard increased in both subjects, particularly in mathematics, and there was a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils making the progress expected between the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school's data show improving progress across the school but this remains slower in Years 3 and 4 than for the older pupils.

The new senior leaders provide greater strategic vision allied with close leadership and management of teaching and learning. There is a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, informed by thorough procedures to check pupils' progress and supported by leadership that is being developed at other levels in the school.

The local authority's support has been good. Help from mathematics consultants has been well planned and effective and programmes to develop leadership at all levels have had a positive impact through the partnership facilitated with a nearby outstanding school.



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

Grahame Sherfield  
Her Majesty's Inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November–December 2009**

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils' progress is consistent across the school.
- Make the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 more consistent by carrying out frequent assessment of pupils' work during lessons to check that tasks are matching pupils' needs, particularly those of the more able.

