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5 November 2010  
Mrs Hart  
Headteacher  
Peartree Primary School  
Peartree Lane  
Welwyn Garden City  
AL7 3XW

Dear Mrs Hart

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Peartree Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 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 governors, staff and pupils who contributed to the inspection. I note that there have been some staff changes since the previous inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 18 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Achievement in writing is good because of effective teaching and the school's concerted efforts to raise the profile of writing. This is confirmed by the latest results in the national tests and scrutiny of pupils' books. A positive trend of improvement in Key Stage 2 mirrors that seen in Key Stage 1, with approximately a third of pupils in Year 6 projected to attain the higher Level 5 at the end of this academic year. Improvements in presentation and quality of work are fully recognised by a reward structure that is valued by the pupils, who strive to win a prize for their efforts. Pupils are responding very well to regular opportunities for them to develop and practise their handwriting. As a result, many older pupils write in a neat cursive style, pens are held correctly and presentation of work is good. The good teaching of phonics is reflected in younger pupils developing the skills to read and write with confidence, and their phonic skills are consolidated through imaginative activities in Year 1 within a context of best Early Years Foundation Stage practice. For example, pupils are encouraged to act out reading an eye test in the optician's role play area.



Teaching and learning continue to improve and are predominantly good. Planning is thorough and key learning intentions are made clear to pupils. Often teaching is vibrant and lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and use resources effectively to actively engage them in a range of learning experiences that also support personal and social development. Teachers are confident to share best practice with each other within a culture of improvement and drive to raise outcomes for pupils. Teachers make effective use of assessment data to monitor the progress of pupils, set targets and tailor support to meet the needs of individuals. Marking is regular and teachers' comments indicate what pupils need to do next to improve. However, pupils are not given sufficient time to follow these through in lessons in order to accelerate progress further.

Pupils' attendance has continued to improve since the last inspection as a result of much effort by staff and education welfare officers, and is now broadly average. Good attendance is rewarded, persistent absenteeism is followed up robustly with parents and carers, and pupils now show an increased enthusiasm to be in school.

Subject leaders play a more prominent role in monitoring standards within their subjects. The electronic analysis of detailed achievement data supports this process. Information and communication technology is used to good effect to maintain a comprehensive oversight of each subject whilst providing easy access to resources for other members of staff. Regular monitoring of teachers' plans and scrutiny of pupils' work support accurate self-evaluation. The newly formed senior curriculum team provides an effective platform for further curriculum development.

School leaders have established a culture of improvement that is driving up standards and increasing teachers' confidence within a positive climate for learning. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored by senior leaders to set targets for further improvement. Governors demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has responded well to focused support from the local authority and other professionals to develop teachers' skills and support school management.

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

Philip Mann  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2009

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in writing throughout the school by:
  - extending the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum throughout Year 1
  - encouraging pupils to hold pencils and pens correctly
  - improving the standard of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - spreading good practice across the school to ensure greater consistency
  - improving the quality of marking to help pupils know how well they are doing and what to do next to improve their work
  - continuing to rigorously promote good attendance.
  
- Extend the roles of the subject leaders by encouraging them to take a stronger lead in managing and monitoring their subjects.