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Miss M Drake
The Headteacher
Mottingham Primary School
Ravensworth Road
London
SE9 4LW

Dear Miss Drake

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Mottingham Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 October 2010 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to those members of staff whose lessons we observed.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have both been appointed to permanent posts since the last inspection. There have been no other significant changes to staffing.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 January 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.

Carefully targeted action to boost the attainment of pupils in Year 6 last year proved very successful. The results were the school's best for some years and substantially narrowed the gap on the national figure. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 in both English and mathematics was also above the government's minimum target. Taken overall, the pupils made good progress across Key Stage 2 but it is clear that they made excellent progress in Year 6 to make up some of the ground they had lost in previous years. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 did not improve substantially and the proportion reaching a secure Level 2 remained well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. At both key stages, few pupils attained the higher levels.

Considerable underachievement remains, but is being tackled with vigour. The school's data show that progress in all year groups is at least satisfactory. Pupils' progress is frequently and closely checked and interventions are made should anyone appear to be falling behind. The relative performance of different groups of pupils is also carefully monitored. Teachers are now held accountable for the progress of their pupils.

The target for attainment set at the last inspection is very challenging. There is a strong determination to ensure that the attainment of this year's Year 6 matches that of last year's. However, it is less likely that pupils will reach broadly average levels at Key Stage 1, where they have much underachievement to make up for. The securely improving rates of progress and the rising trend in attainment are positive indicators, however.

Teaching is of better quality. Teachers have embraced change and have been effectively supported both in improving their practice and in implementing agreed systems and procedures, for example, for marking. A good deal of attention is given to planning lessons and ensuring that work is well matched to the needs of individuals and groups. This is leading to good learning and progress in lessons. Learning intentions are routinely shared with pupils at the start of the lesson. Some, however, are too general and do not identify precisely what the pupils will know or understand by the end of the lesson. Much work has gone in to ensuring that teachers' assessments are accurate. Pupils have targets for their attainment in English and mathematics which are discussed with them and their parents. Pupils are involved in assessing when they have reached them.

Impressive progress has been made in raising attendance and reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Current rates are ahead of the target. Markedly improved relationships with parents and carers have been a significant factor, along with robustly implemented procedures, explicit expectations and effective partnership working with the education welfare service. Pupils' growing enjoyment of school has also helped.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior team have worked well to change the school's culture and ethos for the better. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school and have successfully raised pupils' and teachers' aspirations of what can be achieved. Expectations are high. Aspects of the school's work are regularly checked and the findings used to promote further improvement. The pupils look proud and smart in their new uniforms and tackle their work with enthusiasm. Many steps have been taken to break down barriers to parents' involvement in the life of the school and to seek their views. The success of these moves shows in the increasing number of returns of questionnaires and surveys, and in the environment – the library and dining hall have been decorated by members of the recently formed parent and teacher association.

Effectively targeted support from the local authority and London Challenge has helped the school move forward at a good pace. Levels of support are rightly being scaled back as the school increasingly demonstrates a growing capacity to improve.

The local authority amended its statement of action in line with what was recommended. The action plan was fit for purpose but has now largely been superseded by the school's own plan for further improvement as actions have successfully been completed.

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

Linda McGill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010

- Within one year, raise pupils' attainment and improve achievement at all stages, so that neither is significantly below national averages, and ensure all teaching is consistently good or better.
- Increase attendance to 93.7%, the average for similar schools, within one year by reducing unauthorised absence and developing closer links with parents and carers to show that their children are missing enjoyable and valuable learning opportunities.
- Ensure the assessment of work is accurate across the school and is carried out at least every half term and shared with pupils, parents and carers.