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4 October 2010

Mr K Tinline-Purvis  
St Peter's Primary School  
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Dear Mr Tinline-Purvis

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Peter's Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 September 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my particular thanks to pupils with whom I held discussions.

Since the previous inspection there has been a slight increase in the number of pupils on roll. The deputy headteacher in post at the last inspection left the school in September 2009 and was replaced by a new deputy headteacher in April 2010. Five of the current seven class teachers were in post at the time of the previous inspection. A new chair of governors was appointed from September 2010. The previous chair of governors remains on the governing body. The new school building referred to in the previous inspection report is due to be completed in 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 7–8 October 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has fluctuated over the past three years, but in 2010 was broadly similar to the national average and similar to that seen at the last inspection. However, inspection evidence indicates that attainment in the school is beginning to rise. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is higher in English than mathematics and science, reflecting the better progress pupils are making in this subject. The Year 6 teacher assessments in 2010 indicate attainment is above the national average in English, although higher in reading than writing. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in mathematics and science was



significantly below average in 2009. Pupils, particularly middle-ability boys, underachieved in these subjects. However, the Year 6 teacher assessments for 2010 indicate attainment has risen in these subjects. Pupils' progress in mathematics and science is now satisfactory, although the leadership team accept that pupils' progress in these subjects still needs to be significantly improved.

There has been some steady improvement to the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. However, there is still too much satisfactory teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils behave well, willingly become involved in the activities arranged for them and speak positively about the support they receive from all staff. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear explanations that aid pupils' learning. Where teaching has the greatest impact on learning, pupils are engaged by interesting activities that are well matched to their ability, particularly that of the more able. However, some lessons proceed at too slow a pace and work is not carefully matched to pupils' ability.

The role of subject leaders has been satisfactorily developed since the previous inspection. The leaders of the core subjects all monitor pupils' work and teachers' planning and track the progress of pupils towards their challenging targets. A central system to track the progress of pupils is in place and this is being sensibly developed to allow more frequent evaluation of pupils' progress. This will allow senior leaders and subject leaders to more quickly identify pupils who are underachieving and provide them with support. Subject leaders are aware of the main areas of strength and weaknesses in their subjects and sound plans are in place to drive further improvement. The subject leader for mathematics, with the support of a local authority consultant, has observed nearly all teachers over the past year. Helpful advice has been given to staff about how to improve their teaching. This good practice has not yet been extended to other subjects. Although senior leaders have monitored some teaching over the past year, there is not a sufficiently systematic and regular programme of lesson observations in place.

The curriculum has been reviewed since the previous inspection and pupils are now provided with greater opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects. Teachers are also enthusiastic regarding recent developments to create stronger links between learning in different subjects by basing the curriculum around themes that are relevant and interesting to pupils. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this development on pupils' progress.

Planned school improvements were hampered last academic year by staffing and leadership and management issues. However, the appointment of a new substantive deputy headteacher has strengthened the capacity of the school to improve. Staffing is now more stable and the forthcoming move to a new school building next year provides an exciting opportunity for the school community. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although their

overall judgement of teaching and pupils' learning is generous. A good whole-school plan is in place to drive further improvements.

The local authority has provided helpful support to the school, particularly for mathematics. This is evident in improving pupils' progress in this subject.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Plan more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to write in a range of styles and subjects to help improve their writing skills.
- Ensure teaching throughout the school is more challenging, particularly for the most able, so that pupils make quicker progress in their learning.
- Improve the monitoring of the school's and pupils' work to focus more sharply on those areas which will improve teaching and the curriculum more quickly.