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11 November 2010

Mr Wayne Parkinson
New Whittington Community Primary School
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Derbyshire
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Dear Mr Parkinson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of New Whittington Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 10 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and Chair of Governors for their time and courtesy. I would like to particularly thank the pupils for the enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the school's last inspection, there have been no significant contextual changes.

As a result of the inspection on 27 November 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.

Since the previous inspection progress has accelerated in some areas, particularly in Years 5 and 6, with especially rapid progress in Year 6. School assessment information and 2010 test results for pupils in Year 6 show that attainment in English has improved, with significant improvement in writing. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to encourage more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from more creative opportunities, which provide them with purposeful writing experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 are highly motivated by writing pen-pal letters. As a result, progress is good, attainment is improving and pupils report that writing is more enjoyable. However, although



attainment in English is now above average, attainment in mathematics remains broadly average.

The headteacher is committed to improving progress and raising attainment. He has a clear focus on promoting more effective teaching and learning and has strengthened procedures for monitoring since the last inspection. Middle management roles have been reorganised and their monitoring roles are developing. Consequently, these leaders are beginning to be more responsible and accountable for the outcomes and provision across the whole school. However, there is still more to do because of the inconsistencies that remain in the quality of teaching and learning. Aspects of teaching and learning which require improvement are now well identified, but are not yet being followed up quickly or rigorously enough by all senior leaders.

Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. The tracking of pupils' progress is now more frequent than in the past and is also more robust. The school is beginning to use assessment information to support improvement through identifying group and individual needs more accurately and helping teachers to adjust lesson plans and individual targets accordingly. However, where teaching is less than good, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to set work which is sufficiently challenging or matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Consequently, the pace of progress for many pupils slows. The school is making effective use of improvement targets for pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments and frequently give them pointers for improvement when marking their work. However, sometimes they are not precisely focused upon what is needed to reach the next level and so do not contribute as much as they might to improving progress and raising attainment. Pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to evaluate their own learning. In all lessons pupils worked hard and displayed positive attitudes to learning. Relationships and behaviour were consistently good.

There has been significant investment in developing a new area for Foundation Stage 2 children since the last inspection. This has improved transition through developing continuous provision across the six areas of learning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Additionally, opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to work together now include phonic sessions and outdoor play.

Governors are supportive of the school and are developing greater confidence in holding leaders to account.

Reports show that the school benefits from the challenge and support received from the regular visits made by the local authority, including the school improvement partner.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Provide more opportunities and greater challenge for pupils to write independently and at length, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Ensure teacher use assessment information to challenge pupils appropriately and that pupils have the targets and guidance they need to improve their work.
- Monitor teaching more rigorously to ensure pupils, particularly the more able, are challenged appropriately in every class.
- Provide further opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to interact more to enable smooth transition to Reception.