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Mrs A Norris
Executive headteacher
Beechwood Primary School
Bampfylde Way
Southway
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Dear Mrs Norris

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Beechwood Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 February 2011, 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, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair, and the School Improvement Partner.

The school moved into its new building in June 2010. In September the federated governing body of Oakwood and Beechwood Primary Schools appointed you as executive headteacher of the two schools. An acting head of site for Beechwood school and assistant headteacher were appointed at that time.

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 enthusiasm, energy and ambition to improve learning are evident across the school. There is regular monitoring of teaching, which combined with good use of the best practice from across the two schools is improving teachers' subject knowledge and expertise. The professional development programme helps teachers extend their repertoire of skills to inspire and motivate learners, while the regular moderation of pupils' work deepens teachers' understanding of assessing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The lessons observed across the school illustrated



consistent practice in planning effectively for the range of ability and learning needs of pupils. Assessment information is used well to predict outcomes for the class, and there were many good examples of effective questioning that helped pupils think about what they need to do to reach the next level of learning. While lessons are paced, not all provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt or gain feedback on their learning. The marking of pupils' work has improved. Pupils reported that marking helped them understand where they are getting better and what they needed to improve to meet their targets. They appreciated that their writing targets were transferable to other subjects. In this way the higher expectations of pupils are being consistently applied.

The moderated teacher assessments of Year 6 pupils in 2010 showed no improvement on those of the national test results of 2009. In the main this was due to the underperformance by a minority of pupils. The school's assessment data and the progress seen in lessons during this inspection indicate that the rise in pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics is beginning to accelerate across Year 3 to Year 6. The pupils in Year 6 are well on course to exceed the challenging targets set for English and mathematics, while the vast majority are making the progress expected. The good attention given to calculation, problem solving and mental arithmetic in mathematics lessons, improved resources and visible emphasis on these aspects of mathematics in classroom displays have all helped to improve progress and the quality of teaching. The rapid improvement in writing is a consequence of consistent use of strategies to improve pupils' vocabulary and sentence construction.

The tracking system to monitor pupils' progress towards their targets has developed well since the last inspection. The use of this system, linked to regular pupil progress meetings and work scrutiny, has been effectively improved so that underachieving pupils are now quickly identified and provided with effective support. Despite the increased frequency of reviewing individual education plans, the targets in these plans are not consistent with those set by assessment leaders for these pupils. The school has plans to bring the two systems together.

The federation has continued to develop systems for gaining an accurate view of the school's performance. Responsibility and accountability are distributed effectively across the leadership and management team. The local authority's support has been particularly effective in this area. The School Improvement Partner is experienced in working with federated schools and the training provided to the governing body is ensuring that strategic improvement planning is building well on the advances made so far.

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



Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009.

- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2, by:
 - giving pupils more specific guidance to know what they need to do to reach the next level of learning
 - ensuring that success criteria used in lessons relate to the progress pupils of different abilities need to make.

- Develop more accurate use of targets by:
 - ensuring that the good practice in English is more widespread
 - reviewing more frequently the individual education plans in place for those who need them.