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Mrs Angela Aspinwall-Livesey
Headteacher
Hillside Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Aspinwall-Livesey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hillside Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 November 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 thanks to the pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to me and to the staff, the chair and the vice-chair of governors for their time and courtesy.

Since the last inspection the school has experienced considerable changes to staffing including an informal arrangement by the local authority to appoint an executive leadership team. This comprises of a headteacher and deputy headteacher who jointly lead Hillside Community Primary School and a local primary school. An assistant headteacher and Early Years Foundation Stage leader have also been appointed. The majority of governors have been appointed since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 13 and 14 May 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 **satisfactory progress** in making improvements and **satisfactory progress** in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Results of the 2010 Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 national assessments remain below national expectations. However, evidence collected during the inspection showed that pupils are making better progress and the previous underperformance is beginning to be eradicated.

September 2010



Results in Key Stage 1 for 2010 were disappointing and were significantly lower than expected, although improvements were seen in reading. Through effective and well-targeted interventions, more pupils are now on track to reach the national expected levels of attainment. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2010 showed an improvement at the higher level in English and mathematics and limited improvements in English at the expected level of attainment. The school's current data show academic standards are improving and more pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. This is due to effective improvements in teaching and learning.

Leaders of the school judge that teaching and learning have improved. This view is supported by the findings of this inspection. In the most effective lessons, planning is carefully matched to meet pupils' needs and learning is given a purpose. There are opportunities for collaboration and high expectations exist for all groups of learners. This is not the case in all lessons and there are instances when the pace slows and the more-able pupils are not suitably challenged. Greater focus has been placed through the curriculum on the teaching of English and mathematics in order to raise standards. The teaching of science is incorporated into a cross-curricular approach through a 'curriculum and innovation programme'. As this investigative approach to learning is in its development stage, it is too early to evaluate its impact on pupils' achievements.

Senior leaders have established improved tracking procedures to ensure teachers are aware of pupils' current attainment levels and are thereby better able to meet their needs in lessons. The executive headteacher is providing valuable support and challenge. She knows the school well and is prioritising the appropriate areas for development. Working collaboratively, senior leaders have implemented systems and procedures to positively impact on pupils' outcomes. They are using rigorous monitoring techniques such as observation of lessons, scrutiny of books and pupil progress meetings, which are driving improvements in the quality of provision. Governors are informed of findings and are able to use this information to hold the school to account better. The new governors bring a wide range of expertise to the school, providing support and challenge at all levels. Many governors have received training to become more effective in challenging the school.

The school continues to work on the low rate of attendance. Data show that this year pupils, especially the more vulnerable, are attending better. The leaders of the school have put strategies in place to support this work. For example, staff contact parents on the first day of a pupil's absence, home visits are carried out, and the school works closely with the local authority attendance officer. Children speak of the importance of attending school regularly.

The local authority provides valuable support. The school works effectively with consultants and advisers to bring about change. A detailed plan ensures support is channelled into the necessary areas based on an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses.

I hope that you found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve pupils' attendance.
- Ensure that the governing body holds the school to full account in improving the quality of education.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that there is a higher proportion which is good or better.