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10 December 2010

Mr J Chaloner and Mr J Mayhew  
The Executive Headteacher and the Head of School  
Danetree Junior School  
Danetree Road  
West Ewell  
Epsom  
Surrey  
KT19 9SE

Dear Mr Chaloner and Mr Mayhew

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Danetree Junior School**

Thank you for the help which both of you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 November 2010, for the time Mr Mayhew gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you both provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the three governors and School Improvement Partner, as well as to your pupils who gave me good insight into life in the school.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the school's leadership. At the beginning of October, following the resignation of the school's headteacher, a leadership partnership was formed with Glyn Technology School, a nearby secondary school and National Support School. The partnership is for one year initially. Currently, Glyn's headteacher, a National Leader of Education, is executive head of both schools, and one of their deputy headteachers is working fulltime in Danetree as head of school. A new interim leadership and management team has been formed, which includes two members of the previous senior leadership team, who currently hold more senior posts. A new coordinator for mathematics has been appointed, as well as several new classroom teachers.

As a result of the inspection on 27 April 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.

Pupils join the school with attainment just above the national average. The unvalidated results for 2010 show that attainment in English rose to the national average, with the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels rising from significantly low to just above the national average. This reflects the school's fast response to tackling a fall in attainment in English in 2009. However, in mathematics, attainment fell to below the national average with a significantly low proportion achieving at Level 5. School data show that while progress accelerated, in both English and mathematics, this was not sufficient to make up for a legacy of underachievement in mathematics where progress was inadequate. In English it was satisfactory overall, however, within this there was considerable variation with some pupils making good progress, the majority satisfactory and for a small minority it was inadequate. In addition, data show that progress in reading was better than in writing. Progress in mathematics is improving under the effective leadership of the new mathematics coordinator. More rigorous and robust tracking of pupils' progress is enabling teachers to address learning gaps and make up for past underachievement through more effective interventions. Very recent school data, evidence from my lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils work show that progress is accelerating rapidly across the school. Almost all pupils are making satisfactory, and increasingly good, progress and are set to achieve the challenging and for some the aspirational targets set for them.

Pupils' learning is improving because the majority of teaching is now good, and at times outstanding, because of the greater focus on pupils' learning and a more collaborative approach. Learning objectives are now an integral part of teachers' planning and shared with all pupils at the start of all lessons. While they understand these, progress is best when the learning objectives in teachers' planning and teaching resources fully reflect pupils' differing abilities, current attainment and interests. Improvements have been made in marking, but in a few instances pupils do not receive specific guidance on how to improve, for example in better use of commas or capital letters.

Target setting, now based firmly on pupils' prior and current attainment, is being used well at both school and classroom level to drive up achievement. Teachers' ability to use data is improving, However, this has yet to be translated to pupil level. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how to move on through regular classroom reference to National Curriculum levels and expectations.

The former headteacher built capacity by strengthening leadership at all levels, so that leaders began to be accountable for their areas of responsibility, which contributed to the accelerated progress in 2009-2010. Subject leaders are highly motivated and now have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. They have formulated plans for improvement and are

helping staff to improve in the classroom, which is impacting on progress and in teachers' confidence to deliver English, mathematics and science.

The new executive headteacher and head of school have rapidly identified the school's strengths and areas for development. In a very short space of time, they are providing very clear direction, building on the strengths in teaching and empowering the school's middle leaders and substantive senior leaders. Advanced skills teachers from Glyn and a neighbouring school are working with teachers and subject leaders to further improve classroom practice and further accelerate pupils' progress, in particular in English, science and mathematics. However, the executive headteacher and head of school are mindful that capacity is securely built within the school's own staff, as the partnership is an interim one. Members of the governing body are also now better placed to support the school and are very positive about the new and already effective Glyn-Danetree partnership.

The local authority has been supportive of the school, for example through consultant support for core subject leaders and in helping to broker the Glyn-Danetree partnership.

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

Angela Corbett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2009:**

- building on what has already been achieved, ensure that:
  - there is a better match of work to pupils' needs in lessons through the use of more specific learning objectives
  - assessment and target setting are used consistently at both group and individual level to accelerate pupils' progress
- ensure that subject leaders gain the experience they need to improve the quality of learning and raise pupils' achievement.