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14 January 2011

Mrs Ludlow and Mrs Loach
Kingsthorne Primary School
Cranbourne Road
Kingstanding
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Dear Mrs Ludlow and Mrs Loach

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, parents, staff and the representatives from the governing body and local authority for the time they gave to meet with me.

Since the school was last inspected in November 2009 there have been a number of changes in staffing. You and your deputy headteacher now share the post of headteacher and a similar arrangement has been put in place between your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Two new phase leaders and a special educational needs coordinator have been internally appointed. A further phase leader is covering maternity leave. Three new parent governors have joined the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 4 and 5 November 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 both in making improvements and in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Children enter the school with skill levels that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage in most areas of learning and enter Year 1 broadly in line with the expected level for their age. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have continued to rise and are now in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of pupils, particularly boys, are now achieving



higher standards in writing. For example, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2A+ in writing has improved by 22% since 2009. In mathematics the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 has risen by 20% since the last inspection. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen, although more work remains to be done to bring these figures fully in line with national averages, particularly at the higher levels. The proportion of pupils on track to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is carefully monitored. The latest data indicates that these figures are rising at a steady rate and a greater proportion of pupils are now on track to achieve higher levels across the school.

The 2010 unvalidated RAISE online data indicates that the proportion of pupils making the expected progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 rose by 22% in English and 13% in mathematics. Latest school data indicates that most pupils across the school are making at least the expected progress. The proportion of boys on track to achieve the expected levels in writing has improved significantly. Pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as their needs are quickly identified and suitable support put in place.

The quality of teaching and assessment is improving throughout the school. The proportion of lessons that are good or better is increasing and this is improving outcomes for pupils. The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were judged to be good overall. The school has devised helpful systems to track pupils' progress. As a result, teachers and pupils have a secure understanding of how well they are progressing and the next steps required to secure further improvement. Teachers' planning is detailed, clearly linked to the most recent assessment information and includes a range of activities to challenge all levels of ability.

The school has recently revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils' interests and needs are fully met. Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn through practical activities. For example, during the inspection pupils were observed thoroughly enjoying a practical geography lesson where they were creating a vortex to help them understand the forces inside a tornado. A greater proportion of practical activities in lessons is beginning to make a positive contribution to the engagement of all pupils, particularly boys, in their learning and accelerating rates of progress. However, on occasion, adults talk too much in lessons and this limits opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning or to find solutions to problems for themselves.

Senior staff and the school family support worker have worked closely with parents and education welfare staff to improve rates of attendance and reduce persistent absence. Since the last inspection, attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. In addition, rates of persistent absence have reduced by over 3%. Parents who met with the inspector report that they are very pleased with the information provided by the school about how well their children are progressing and how they can help at home. In particular, parents enjoy learning with their children through the Inspire project and accessing adult education courses provided by the school to improve

their own skills. Family support staff work closely with families to ensure they are aware of the benefits of children attending school regularly.

The headteachers and senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. The work of the school is evaluated rigorously and improvements to the quality of teaching, rising standards and improving achievement demonstrate a good capacity to improve further. Members of the governing body are supportive and knowledgeable about the work of the school. They are developing their expertise to enable them to shape the direction of the school more effectively. The school values the support from the local authority. Training has been provided, as requested by the school, and has been effective in addressing areas of weakness and supporting secure school improvement. The impact of this support has been good. During the inspection, safeguarding procedures were checked and found to meet the latest requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve attainment and progress in writing, particularly for boys, and in mathematics for the most able pupils so that more pupils reach higher levels in national tests and assessments.
- Improve the quality of teaching to good across Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - improving the engagement of boys in all lessons
 - maximizing opportunities for practical work and the use of ICT to motivate all pupils
 - improving the use of assessment information to ensure that there is greater challenge for the most able pupils.
- Build on the existing good relationships with parents and carers to increase their involvement in their children's education and to improve attendance by:
 - improving annual reports to identify more clearly pupils' levels of attainment, progress and where further work is needed
 - making parents aware of the link between attendance and the progress made by pupils.