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Friday 15 October 2010

Mrs Tomaney
Maple Cross Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School
Denham Way
Maple Cross
WD3 9SS

Dear Mrs Tomaney

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Maple Cross Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Thursday 14 October 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the governors who met with me and the children who spent their lunch time talking about their experiences.

There have been several changes at the school since the last inspection. The number of pupils has increased to 106. Reception and Nursery classes are now taught separately. One teacher has left the school and two new teachers have been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 26 February 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.

Rates of progress are improving throughout the school. Pupils are on track to reach higher standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements have been most impressive in reading and mathematics. While improvements in writing have been more modest, the work in pupils' books and the quality of teaching indicates that the schools strategies are beginning to raise standards throughout the school.

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Teachers have a clearer understanding of needs of individuals in their classes. There has been a considerable improvement in teachers' ability to meet the full range of needs and abilities in most classes. In many classes, marking is becoming increasingly useful, with teachers giving clear guidance to help pupils improve their work. In the minority of lessons where

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teaching remains satisfactory rather than good, more able pupils do not make as much progress as they could because activities and questioning are not sufficiently challenging.

Pupils' progress is monitored with increasing care. Senior leaders are developing an exceptionally useful picture of the progress being made by individuals and different groups of pupils. This information is strongly influencing the effective decisions being made to target support and improve teaching. Pupils are no longer allowed to fall behind without additional help being put in place. This strategy is being particularly successful in raising standards of attainment in reading and mathematics.

Governance has improved considerably since the last inspection. The governing body have an increasingly clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are able to talk about the issues facing the school with a detailed understanding that was not evident at the last inspection. They demonstrate a clearer understanding of the school's current priorities and the effectiveness of improvement strategies employed. Governors are leading the developments in community cohesion. As a result of their action, the school is becoming increasingly respected within the local community. Cohesion within school continues to improve with pupils talking about the friendly atmosphere and the fact that pupils get on with each other and their teachers. International links are developing with, for example, pupils writing to pen pals in a school in Colombia. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of diversity found in the United Kingdom remains at an early stage of development.

The local authority continues to provide effective support to the school. An improvement consultant is currently working along side the new literacy coordinator in improving writing across the school. Local authority advisors have worked closely with the leadership team in monitoring improvements and providing expertise. This has included advanced skills teacher support when tackling weaknesses. Inspection evidence shows that this additional, highly focused support has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and the capacity of leaders at all levels in driving school improvement.

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

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve rates of progress, levels of achievement and standards further by ensuring that the quality of educational provision is consistently good across the school.
- Improve the procedures for assessing pupils' progress by building on best practice within the school.
- Ensure that governors play an effective role in monitoring the school's work and participate effectively in planning for school improvement.
- Take effective steps to promote community cohesion.