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Ms Helen Roderick
Headteacher
Manorside Combined School
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Dear Ms Roderick

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Manorside Combined School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 February 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. In particular, please pass on my thanks to Ann Harris, your Chair of Governors and Caroline Surey your literacy leader for the additional time they gave to meeting with me.

As a result of the inspection on 22 and 23 September 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.

Good progress has been made by the school in addressing the key issue to improve the frequency and quality of writing opportunities within the school. As a result, enhanced opportunities have been created within the taught curriculum for pupils of all ages to write. This is leading to pupils at all key stages making good and sometimes accelerated progress in developing their writing skills.

A robust system of monitoring pupils' progress has been established and is being used effectively to set targets, accelerate pupils' learning and raise their overall achievements. This is ensuring more pupils are provided with the appropriate challenge in lessons to make consistently good progress in their work. Recent test results for 2010 show positive improvements in pupils' achievements, especially in the lower years and in writing. However, although attainment by the end of Key



Stage 2 in English and mathematics has improved significantly, standards remain well below the national average. Considering pupils' low, and sometimes very low, starting points, the school is nevertheless successfully helping an increasing proportion of pupils to make good progress in their learning. This is because weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum have been effectively addressed and fully embraced by all members of staff in order to improve outcomes for pupils.

More pupils are now experiencing consistently good teaching as teachers use assessment outcomes carefully to plan lessons that provide for the needs of all pupils. A particular strength of the school is how well teachers provide detailed feedback to pupils, both orally and through marking. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and appreciate the effort their teachers put into making lessons interesting and fun. They speak very confidently about what they are learning and their targets. Older pupils in particular understand in detail how to improve their work and are consistently supported in doing so.

Effective work has taken place in introducing a curriculum that is focused on developing pupils' skills for learning and engaging them in their learning. The school possesses an informed understanding of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. It is actively promoting community cohesion within the school community and is working closely with its neighbouring schools to strengthen this provision further. The school is aware that there is still work to do to develop pupils' awareness and first-hand appreciation of the richness of faiths, societies and lifestyles in other parts of the United Kingdom.

The school ensures adults are appropriately trained and kept up to date in safeguarding pupils and is vigilant in the way that records are kept. Good work has been done by the school to change the culture of low attendance that historically has been well below the national average. The school experiences a high level of pupil mobility and works closely with the local authority to vigorously monitor attendance and lateness rates. As a result, attendance rates are improving but remain slightly below the national average overall.

The school has experienced significant changes to staffing in the past year. However, the headteacher and governing body have worked closely together to ameliorate the changes and strengthen the quality of provision. They have been particularly successful in providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills throughout the curriculum.

With a secure and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement the headteacher, through her determination and a commitment to securing high quality learning for all, is enabling leaders and managers, at all levels, to grow in confidence and sustain the necessary improvements. The governing body is also developing a more informed and confident approach to setting the strategic direction of the school. As a result, the school's effectiveness in tackling areas for improvement is convincing and evidence of its good capacity to improve further.



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

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Implement strategies to improve standards in writing throughout the school by ensuring that pupils make similar good progress in developing their writing skills in all year groups.
- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in Year 1 and Year 2, by ensuring that pupils are consistently provided with activities which provide them with the challenge they need in order to make the progress they are capable of.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society by developing links with schools or other settings in Britain which display a greater ethnic diversity.