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23 January 2011

Mrs S Sanderson  
Headteacher  
Brunswick School  
Brunswick Road  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
CA11 7LX

Dear Mrs Sanderson,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Brunswick School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I also welcomed the opportunity to talk with members of the governing body, staff and pupils.

At the time of the last inspection the headteacher and assistant headteacher had been in post for four weeks. Since that time the teaching staff have remained stable except for the appointment of a part-time numeracy teacher and three teaching assistants who support pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. There has been a sharp increase since the last inspection in the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is now well above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has also risen markedly and is now close to average.

As a result of the inspection on 6 October 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment in teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 has been significantly below average for the last two years. However, the school's tracking data and pupils' work seen in books and on classroom walls indicate that attainment is rising. Standards are now closer to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current Year 2, attainment is highest in writing and mathematics. In these subjects, school data show that over three-quarters of pupils are on track to reach or exceed national average standards. Attainment is lower in reading but intensive intervention strategies, which give timely and sharply focused extra help to those who need it, are now beginning to have an impact on accelerating pupils' learning. The increasing pace of pupils' learning in phonics (the sounds that letters make), better application of the skills developed and the use of new phonics

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

teaching resources throughout the school are all beginning to have an impact on raising attainment. Pupils now enter Year 1 with a more secure understanding. Consequently, Key Stage 1 teachers have a sound platform on which to build further learning and a better capacity to bring about further improvement in standards. In Year 2, detailed tracking shows that all groups of pupils are making at least expected progress and that higher attainers are on track to reach the higher levels in teacher assessments this year.

Since the last inspection, pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate and their attainment is rising because teaching and learning are improving. Teachers now have a much better knowledge of subject levels and of how to assess pupils' work and track their progress. Greater use is being made of assessment data to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and plan lessons. Books are marked regularly and most pupils are clear about how to improve their work. Teachers and teaching assistants are making learning increasingly personalised for pupils. They give constructive individual help when needed, particularly to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English benefit from small group teaching, where work, such as the study of a traditional Polish story, is closely tailored to their needs. Classrooms are vibrant with excellent displays of pupils' work, 'learning walls' and pictures of pupils enjoying learning. In most lessons the pace of learning is brisk and all pupils are challenged to achieve their best. In other lessons, more time is taken in managing the class and expectations are not as high, as a result, the pace of learning slows.

The gains that pupils are making, the improvements in teaching and the school's upward trend of improvement are the direct result of the determined and decisive leadership of the headteacher. She has been a catalyst for change. Priorities for improvement have been identified, strengths built upon and weaknesses systematically and successfully tackled. The roles of staff have been sensitively developed so they feel empowered and fully involved in school improvement. Senior leaders have been given opportunities for high quality staff development and are now able to spread their good practice to other schools. Much improved systems to analyse assessment data and to track pupils' progress have been introduced and are now being used by all staff. Members of the governing body are immersed in the life and work of the school. They provide both challenge and support in equal measure and have been proactive in, for example, reducing a budget deficit and improving the school's provision for information and communication technology. Members of the governing body, leaders and managers at all levels and all staff have already made a significant impact on raising attainment and have a keen awareness of how to raise standards further. All of this bodes well for further sustained improvement at Brunswick School.

The school has received good support from the local authority through the School Improvement Partner. She has supported the headteacher, helped to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and provided opportunities for senior leaders to develop their roles 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

Mrs Ann Wallis  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place 6 October 2009**

- Raise the standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics by the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the pace at which they can work.
  
- Improve teaching in Years 1 and 2 so that it is consistently of good quality by:
  - ensuring that pupils are made more aware of how to improve their work
  - ensuring that teachers consistently use the information they have from assessing pupils' work to plan tasks and activities which enable pupils to move on quickly in their learning.