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26 January 2011

Mrs Ceranne Litton  
The Headteacher  
Grove Park Community Primary School  
Hilton Drive  
Sittingbourne  
Kent  
ME10 1PT

Dear Mrs Litton

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Grove Park Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to staff and governors who met with me during my visit.

Since the previous inspection, the proportions of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs have both increased considerably and are now above 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

National test results in English and mathematics for 2010 remained broadly average, but nevertheless showed a continuing rise in the proportion of Year 6 pupils making expected progress from their starting points in Year 3. The school's latest assessments show that this figure is set to rise further in 2011, with the majority of pupils already close to meeting their end-of-year targets. Attainment at the end of Year 2 dipped a little in 2010. A fifth of this cohort were identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities but, nevertheless, along with other groups, made good progress across Years 1 and 2. Pupils' continuing good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning contribute to their improved progress.



The school is successfully accelerating pupils' progress in writing and mathematics through well-planned and focused interventions. These are helping to ensure that pupils make up lost ground in their learning due to past weaknesses and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result, there has been a rapid increase in the proportion of pupils throughout the school now working at age-related levels. Along with an improved quality of teaching, these interventions are contributing to the overall good progress now made by pupils throughout the school.

On four mornings per week, each year group is split into groups for targeted work on sounds and letters (phonics), skills to improve the quality of writing, and extended writing. Further to these interventions, class lessons provide good opportunities for extended writing, showing how pupils' work is to be reviewed and developed over a period of time. These opportunities draw on the topics pupils are studying, such as the Second World War, so adding interest and relevance to their work. Drama and role play are helping to extend pupils' ideas and vocabulary for writing, such as the dialogue between Florence Nightingale and her patients, developed by Year 2 pupils. Individual targets are effectively helping to guide pupils in their learning, seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils understood the purpose of targets in helping them to improve their work. Intervention groups for mathematics are run in the afternoons. Pupils have good opportunities to respond to teachers' marking, with time set aside at the start of each day for pupils to discuss their work and make corrections.

Teachers make good use of assessment to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Their planning shows different ability levels at which groups and individuals are currently working and sets out activities accordingly. It also shows written notes where these have been revised in the light of ongoing assessments. Where teaching occasionally falls short, it is due to the delivery of the lesson rather than its content. For example, there is sometimes potential to use teaching assistants more productively throughout lessons. Their skills have, nevertheless, been developed well, both to support the specific needs of the increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and to run intervention groups.

Leaders have helped to ensure a greater consistency of good teaching and eliminated any unsatisfactory teaching. Their response to issues raised at the last inspection, regular progress meetings with teachers, and monitoring of lessons, planning and pupils' work have formed a programme for effective professional development. For example, guidance on developing calculation strategies in mathematics has helped to increase pupils' skills of mental recall, now more speedily and carefully checked at the start of lessons, and their approach to problem solving. Although the school's planned actions for improvement are appropriate and meeting with success, their focus on the key areas for improvement is not sharp enough, nor is it evident how actions will be closely and regularly monitored and evaluated, especially by the governing body, in relation to raising attainment and progress across the school. The School Improvement Partner has worked closely with the



school both in monitoring its improvement and in identifying emerging priorities for development.

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

Peter Thrussell  
Additional Inspector

## Annex

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

- Raise standards and accelerate the progress that pupils make in writing by:
  - teachers consistently giving pupils guidance in their marking on how to improve
  - establishing writing support groups alongside the successful reading support groups
  - teachers in Key Stage 2 providing pupils with greater opportunities for extended writing.
- Raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics by:
  - teachers focusing more sharply on the time implications of the mental and oral starters in lessons
  - securing greater effectiveness of the mathematics support groups.
- Improve teaching so that it is of a consistently good quality by:
  - improving teachers' planning for and implementation of challenges that meet the differing needs of pupils
  - teachers consistently focusing their deployment of other adults in the classroom so that they make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

