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Thursday 21 October 2010

Mr Andrew Morrish  
Victoria Park Primary  
Ballot Street  
Smethwick  
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Dear Mr Morrish

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Victoria Park Primary**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 20 October 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Since the Ofsted inspection in July 2009 four new teachers, including an assistant headteacher, have been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 2–3 July 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

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Teacher assessments for pupils who left Year 6 in July 2010 indicate that the improving trend of attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science from 2005 to 2009 has been continued in 2010. The gap between the school's attainment and the national average is continuing to close. This improvement is reflected in the increased rate of progress made by pupils in lessons.

In all of the lessons visited during two learning walks, pupils were making at least satisfactory progress. However, the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils remains inconsistent. Pupils make the best progress in Year 6 where high



expectations, a good level of challenge for the most able pupils, a brisk pace and very good levels of pupil engagement characterise lessons. In other year groups, the pace of learning was occasionally slowed because classroom routines were not fully embedded or teachers' expectations were not high enough. For example, pupils took too long to follow teachers' instructions or pupils of different abilities were not all given work which provided a high level of challenge.

The school's work to improve the curriculum and provide greater opportunities to develop literacy skills is a significant contributory factor to the improvements it is making. Pupils are now more enthusiastic about school and attendance has improved. Consequently, pupils are enabled to make better progress. Increased opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills are contributing to the improvements seen in their writing.

You have introduced a comprehensive system to observe and assess the learning and development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This information is used alongside the children's own ideas to plan learning activities. This has been particularly effective in the indoor environment where children were observed to be engaged in a suitable range of interesting activities. Adults were relating well to the children and intervening appropriately in their learning and development. There was a range of activities available outdoors and children were choosing to work outside. However, adults did not take full advantage of all of the opportunities to engage in conversation with the children and extend their learning and development to the same extent as was happening indoors.

The range of monitoring and evaluation activities which you have introduced provides a comprehensive overview of the quality of teaching and of the progress made by pupils. Written feedback from lesson observations is detailed and provides helpful development points which are followed up on subsequent observations. However, written records indicate that these development points are not always followed up through other monitoring activities. Consequently, action to improve the quality of teaching is not as effective as it could be.

The school's work to improve the curriculum and enhance the range of activities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make are examples of how the school has increased its capacity to improve.

The local authority has provided helpful support, particularly with moderation of the school's self-evaluation and in supporting the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Mark Mumby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise standards in English, particularly writing, mathematics and science by ensuring activities meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.
- Ensure assessment information is used to plan work that meets the needs and interests of Nursery and Reception children, especially in the Reception outdoor environment.
- Make certain monitoring information accurately evaluates teaching in relation to pupils' learning and that this information is used to quicken learning and accelerate pupils' progress.