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Mrs J Williams
Headteacher
North Road Community Primary School
North Road
Yate
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Dear Mrs Williams

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of North Road Community Primary 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. Please pass my thanks on to the pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body with whom I held discussions.

Since the last inspection, a number of changes have occurred at the school. Following a period as acting headteacher from April 2010, the new headteacher was recently appointed to the substantive post. There have been changes to the teaching team and a significant reorganisation of the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 January 2010, 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.

Pupils' attainment and rates of progress are improving again after an unsettled period for the school last year had an adverse impact on levels of pupils' achievement. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were broadly similar to the national average and similar to those seen at the last inspection. However, attainment for younger pupils in the school fell to below average levels because their rates of progress were slow. The headteacher took concerted action to ensure local authority consultancy support was in place to help teachers plan lessons that better addressed the apparent gaps in these pupils' basic skills. For example, a systematic



approach to developing their awareness of phonics for reading and spelling was introduced and is already having a beneficial impact on literacy levels and pupils' confidence.

The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment remains a concern for the school. Clear action has already been taken to identify more able pupils, to modify teaching plans so that these address their learning needs and to provide additional motivation and help through a dedicated study group and advice for parents. In some lessons, pupils ready to move forward more quickly in their learning are enabled to do so, through teachers' judicious use of targeted questions to individual pupils and an accent on problem-solving tasks. However, opportunities for challenge and engagement through stimulating group and independent work are not apparent in all classes.

A clear action plan has been put in place to monitor, evaluate and develop teaching and learning. The school has been given good advice and consultancy from the local authority to develop this aspect of its work. While teaching is typically satisfactory, some good features are emerging. For example, teachers are sharing criteria for successful learning with pupils who find this helpful when tackling new work. Computer technology is used well to clarify teaching points and to promote pupils' research skills. The school recognises that improvements to teaching are not fully embedded across the school and senior leaders need to ensure further professional development opportunities are provided that result in consistently good levels of teaching.

Teachers are now providing regular opportunities for pupils to write for a purpose across different subjects. Pupils receive useful advice through marking in their books to help them improve their writing further. The use of progress books to encourage them to write unaided at length and to self-assess their own development is raising the quality of their work. While year-group writing targets are in place and help pupils focus on the next steps in their learning, these are not well matched to their individual needs, especially the more able. Opportunities are missed to use small group teaching to push these pupils forward more quickly in understanding the features of different types of writing.

The headteacher has made good progress in uniting staff in a concerted drive for school improvement. She has acted quickly in introducing team-based approaches to checking assessments of pupils' learning in order to secure their accuracy. Robust systems for tracking pupils' progress have been put in place. These involve all teachers in monitoring the extent to which pupils are meeting the challenging targets that are being set for them. Her accurate appraisal of the school's improvement priorities has been used to devise a comprehensive plan for raising attainment. The local authority has provided good support to help develop the work of subject leaders, for example, as they begin to monitor teaching. Some are now actively scrutinising the quality of lesson planning and pupils' work but these processes are not fully in place across all subjects.



The new governing body is becoming aware of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. It is appropriately involved in a process of professional review with its leaders and as a result has improved its knowledge of the work of the school. The local authority continues to provide good advice and consultancy for leaders, governors and teachers. With the new leadership team now directing improvement, it envisages concentrating further support on helping the school develop classroom practice.

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 Townsend
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 14 and 15 January 2010

- Raise standards in writing by increasing opportunities for writing skills to be developed in other subjects and by assessing pupils' progress towards their writing targets.
- Increase the progress of more able pupils by ensuring that their work in all subjects matches their needs and is suitably challenging.
- Make leadership and management more effective through delegation of responsibility that is accompanied by clear expectations of postholders having impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

