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Mr T Coppin  
Alton Park Junior School  
Alton Park Road  
Clacton-on-Sea  
Essex  
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Dear Mr Coppin

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Alton Park Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 March 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 the members of the governing body and your school improvement adviser who gave up their time to talk to me during the inspection.

I noted that there have been no changes in the context of the school since the last inspection. At that time you had been in post for a term.

As a result of the inspection on 14 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.

While the attainment of pupils at Alton Park remains below that expected for pupils nationally, the detailed tracking systems that have been introduced show good and improving levels of individual achievement.. The wide ranging data you now hold on the progress of pupils shows that current pupils across the school are now making good progress from their starting points. The large majority of your Year 6 pupils are

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on track to gain at least two levels of progress during their time at Alton Park. This considerable improvement during the current academic year is linked directly to the much improved data collection and analysis, precise tracking of individual attainment and development of the curriculum so it better meets individual needs. Pupils are now enjoying learning, have clear targets and are supported by effective assessment of their work so that they know how to improve their work and fulfil their potential.

The creation of an effective leadership team has provided clear strategic direction, enabling the school to focus on the identified areas for improvement and the overall raising of standards and attainment. The curriculum, which at the time of the last inspection was failing to engage many of the boys, has been re-designed. New reading books have been acquired and teaching has become much more cross-curricular, with a greater focus on promoting literacy across the whole range of subjects. Boys say that learning is now much more fun, often linked to real life situations and problem solving. Consequently, boys' standards have risen and these improvements are being sustained. The attitudes of boys, many of whom were previously unengaged, have been addressed very effectively. Alongside academic improvements, a new behaviour policy is in place based on rewards for positive behaviour and pupils are involved in developing its content and in its implementation. This is effective in promoting pupils' positive behaviour and engagement and their behaviour was exemplary during the inspection. This development has had a clear impact on the behaviour of the significant number of boys whose behaviour had traditionally been challenging. Its impact is monitored closely by an assistant headteacher to ensure that its effectiveness is maintained.

Staff have a much better picture of pupils' attainment and progress and all are clear on their responsibilities for raising pupils' achievement. Termly meetings are held to examine the progress of every pupil and result in timely support and intervention, where this is necessary. Marking has improved and pupils are made aware of how they can improve their work. Pupils have specific targets and know what they need to do to meet them. They respond positively to opportunities to assess their own work and discuss the work of classmates, demonstrated effectively in an English lesson in Year 6. Teachers now use data confidently to individualise learning and this, together with their regular assessment, identifies where pupils need extra help and support.

Attendance remains low, although there has been satisfactory improvement in the way the school is tackling persistent absence. Senior staff have introduced a range of positive strategies to engage parents. These are beginning to have a positive impact, reflected in the good number who attended assembly during the visit. A good range of initiatives and competitions stress the need for pupils to attend. Effective collaboration with external professionals, such as the family liaison worker is now helping the school develop positive links with hard-to-reach parents. Clear structures for dealing with absence have been introduced but above all, the pupils say that they are now enjoying coming to school far more than previously.

Teaching observed during the visit was good. The clear focus on raising standards and achievement, the effective developments in tracking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning combine to give the school a confidence that its improvement will be sustained into the future. The effective leadership demonstrates strategic vision and the governing body has been reinvigorated by new members, including several new parent governors. It is part of the wider improvement and, as a result, the governing body is better able to meet its responsibilities and challenge the school to sustain its improvement.

The local authority support to the school has been good. It has promoted effective management systems and worked with teachers to help them maximise the effective use of data so they know and can address the needs of every pupil they teach. The positive impact of support from the local authority, including consultancy and increased time for the school improvement partner, is acknowledged by the school.

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

Martyn Groucutt  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the interest of boys in their learning through clear, whole-school strategies for managing behaviour and promoting positive attitudes, so that there is a measurable, sustained impact on their attainment and achievement.
- Raise attendance rates by:
  - working closely with hard to reach parents and carers
  - using innovative and/or individualised strategies to secure and maintain effective improvement.
- Involve pupils in assessing their own progress towards challenging targets by developing staff confidence and consistency in using the new assessment strategies.