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10 March 2011

Mrs J Sutton  
Headteacher  
Newport Primary School  
St Paul's Road  
Middlesbrough  
North Yorkshire  
TS1 5NQ

Dear Mrs Sutton,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Newport Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative from the local authority whom I met during the day.

Since the last inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and there are currently two long-term supply teachers working in the school.

As a result of the inspection on 30 November and 1 December 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.

The school has responded positively to the issues identified at its previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely as a team, are committed to making improvements and have high aspirations for both staff and pupils. They have taken a structured, measured and rigorous approach to making improvements and have ensured that each new strategy is fully embedded before introducing the next stage. They fully analyse and evaluate the impact of the work done to ensure it is effective before taking the next steps. This has ensured that the strategies implemented provide very firm foundations on which to build. They have introduced rigorous systems for collecting and analysing data on pupils' progress which enables them to identify precisely which pupils need additional challenge or support. All staff are now held accountable for the progress of pupils through regular pupils' progress meetings and through the monitoring and evaluation of strategies to support particular groups of pupils in their learning. As a result, the rates of progress for groups of pupils are increasing.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The school's own data, evidence seen in lessons and in pupils' work show that the rates of progress made by more-able pupils are increasing in most classes, although less so in classes where there has been some staffing turbulence. Senior leaders have identified exactly which more-able pupils were not making sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics and have taken positive steps to improve this. Staff are now working more effectively as a team and because of high quality modelling of teaching, particularly by the deputy headteacher, this has shown that all pupils can achieve more. As a result, teachers have higher expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve and pupils are keen to achieve their very best. More-able pupils said their work is challenging and they find their lessons more enjoyable and fun. They fully understand their curricular targets and find marking now helps them to improve their work. In the whole-class sessions observed, some challenging questions were directed at more-able pupils and tasks provided for groups, pairs and individuals were more closely matched to the pupils' abilities.

Pupils now have very positive attitudes to learning and discussions with them showed that they thoroughly enjoy extending their learning, for example, through using computers to do further research or when they are inspired to do extra work at home to study topics in more depth. The rate of progress of all pupils, including more-able pupils is increasing because the quality of teaching is improving. Assessment is used more effectively to plan work which closely meets pupils' needs, class timetables have been re-organised to provide more time to focus on the development of basic skills and the pace of learning has increased. While questioning skills have improved, there is still more work to be done to ensure that even more high order questions are used to challenge pupils' thinking further.

The curriculum is more stimulating and interesting for pupils. There has been a strong focus on developing basic skills particularly in learning letters and sounds (phonics), spelling, handwriting and basic numeracy skills. This has enabled pupils to gain more confidence in applying their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and provided firm foundations for further learning. While the curriculum is still being developed to provide more creativity and a clear progression for pupils to develop key skills, pupils were able to give examples of where they have successfully used their numeracy skills in science lessons and literacy skills. Although pupils said they enjoy writing, some felt that opportunities for writing at length were more limited and this was borne out by the writing seen in pupils' books. Senior leaders have already identified this as a 'next step' in their curriculum development. In lessons seen, pupils were excited and enthusiastic about their learning. For example, one pupil in Year 1 who started the school with little or no English spoke at length about his passionate interest in discovering about 'the earth', showed the inspector a variety of books and shared his in-depth knowledge about this topic. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed some exciting topic work on space travel and thoroughly enjoyed making torches using electrical circuits while others developed their reading skills through activities in the outdoor area. Older pupils enthused about their work on the Ancient Egyptians and Ancient Greeks and others showed the depth of their creativity when describing the 'worlds' they had created from their own imaginations.

The senior leadership team has grown to include phase leaders and the roles of subject leaders are being distributed and developed as staff gain more confidence in sharing their expertise with others. Subject leaders are beginning to be involved in monitoring and evaluating the work in their subjects, for example, through scrutiny of planning and pupils' work, although senior leaders acknowledge there is still further work to be done in this area.

Teaching and the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved markedly. In lessons seen, staff were consistently using questions to promote children's learning and to develop their speaking and listening skills. Staff listened carefully to children's contributions and responded appropriately to move them on in their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader demonstrated the use of higher-order questioning skills but this has yet to be developed across the whole team. There was a strong focus on developing children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills both indoors and outdoors, particularly for nursery-aged children, for example, counting the pieces of treasure in the sand. Children chose to use computers and the interactive whiteboards to engage in problem-solving activities, taking turns and sharing the equipment. The range of activities outdoors has been successfully extended to match those indoors. Children were fully engaged in working in the 'garage' which was an activity that arose from their own interests. They had visited a local garage and were using their basic skills in numeracy to measure and count tyres and their early literacy skills to write notes and make records of their work. Speaking and listening skills were successfully promoted through using the telephone and dealing with their 'customers' who required their car to be mended or their petrol tanks to be filled. This is enabling children to make more progress and assessments show that the rates of progress have increased since the last inspection for children in 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

Christine Inkster  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Increase the progress of more-able pupils, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of these pupils
  - providing a higher level of challenge in whole-class discussions and in group tasks
  - providing a curriculum that consistently matches the higher levels of the National Curriculum.
  
- Provide a more stimulating curriculum, by:
  - extending the role of middle managers in developing their subjects
  - linking the newly implemented curriculum more closely to the development of skills, particularly literacy and numeracy.
  
- Make the teaching and curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage more consistent, by:
  - using questions more effectively and responding more closely to children's contributions
  - providing an appropriate curriculum at the right level for nursery-aged children to develop their problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills
  - extending the outdoor learning to match the range of activities indoors.