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Matthew Smith  
Northfield Manor Primary School  
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Dear Mr Smith

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and planning meeting, and for the information you provided before and during the inspection. My thanks also go to the pupils and teachers observed during lessons, as well as the deputy headteacher and staff spoken to during the visit. I would also like to thank the local authority's senior adviser and Chair of the Governing Body who, at short notice, made themselves available to meet me during the inspection. The central record of suitability checks on staff was scrutinised and it meets the current government requirements.

There have been significant staff changes since the school's last inspection, including three newly qualified teachers who joined the school, and two teachers who are covering temporary absence until the permanent staff return. Pupil numbers have increased as a result of the high inward mobility of families moving into the local area. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language, have increased markedly in the last two years and are now well above average. The school has established a soft federation and partnership with a high performing primary school in the local authority to help support its improvement.

As a result of the inspection on 21 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements, and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Although pupils' attainment remains below average, it is rising steadily and edging towards national age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 in English and

mathematics. There is still some way to go to achieve the targets recommended in the last inspection because the impact of high inward mobility is hampering the school's efforts to raise attainment as quickly as originally expected. Teachers have successfully adapted their lesson planning by using more accurate assessments of pupils' progress to help them pitch the work at the right level for all pupils. The deputy headteacher has been diligent and highly effective in leading improvements to pupils' assessments by keeping robust and accurate records of their attainment and progress. This has helped teachers to more accurately identify different attainment levels when measuring how much progress pupils are making. In addition, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have stepped up their monitoring of teaching and learning to provide more rigorous evaluations of teachers' performance. The combined effect of accurate assessments with regular checks on teachers' performance are raising attainment and increasing the proportion of good teaching.

Despite the improvements made, there remain inconsistencies in the pace of learning in lessons and the quality of teaching across the school. In some lessons, not enough is expected of the pupils. Pupils are being set learning targets in reading, writing and mathematics, but are not always clear about the steps needed to reach their targets. Although teachers have improved their knowledge of the levels pupils are expected to reach, they do not always provide tasks that help pupils work towards their targets quickly enough. Good teaching is accelerating pupils' achievement, which is more consistently evident in Years 5 and 6. Assessments continue to show good outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and there is an improving trend in pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2. The most significant inconsistencies in pupils' progress in English and mathematics are in Years 3 and 4 where the teaching is not always sufficiently ambitious to accelerate pupils' learning.

Pupils are usually engaged in lessons and behave well. Teachers provide some stimulating topics for them to study, with opportunities for pupils to write at length independently. This has increased pupils' confidence and is improving the accuracy of their writing. For example, in Year 6, pupils produced good quality play-scripts and imaginative poetry having studied different genres of writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with effective daily one-to-one support and a range of intervention work that is improving their reading levels. Booster work for pupils who find learning mathematics difficult is helping to improve their ability to use different methods of calculation. Interventions and support are also helping pupils learning to speak English as an additional language to make satisfactory progress and, as a result, their attainment is comparable to their peers nationally. However, the pace of learning in some lessons slows when teachers expect pupils to listen during class discussions for too long. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils because the work planned does not challenge them sufficiently. In mathematics, some lessons do not extend pupils' knowledge of numbers and measures. Too much time is spent

consolidating what has already been learned, leaving too little time for extension work towards higher levels.

The local authority's advisory team has provided good support. Systematic reviews are helping to steer the school towards improving the teaching. The most recent review in December 2010, for example, identified clear pointers for improvement following a thorough observation and analysis of lessons. The school has established a partnership with a high performing school which provides opportunities for staff to see and share best practice. Other links with more effective schools also help to provide those who manage subjects with opportunities to try potentially more effective teaching methods and learning programmes. The leadership team and staff are increasing their capacity for sustained improvement by taking on more responsibility, through regular pupil progress meetings, and by evaluating pupils' and each other's performance.

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

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the accuracy and use of assessment, so that reliable data, understood by all staff, is frequently used to monitor progress and guide day-to-day teaching.
- Increase the proportion of high-quality teaching so that by the end of 2010 over 80% of lessons are good or better and over 10% are outstanding. Do this by making differentiation, pace and the use of learning objectives and levels far more effective.
- Set increasingly challenging targets for standards so that by the end of 2011, attainment in English and mathematics significantly exceeds national averages.