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23 March 2011

Mrs Claire Stevens  
Headteacher  
Newbridge Junior School  
New Road  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire  
PO2 7RW

Dear Mrs Stevens

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Newbridge Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 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 your senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and your School Improvement Partner for meeting with me.

Since the previous inspection there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and an increase in the number of pupils whose first language is not English. Currently, 17 different home languages are represented in the school.

As a result of the inspection on 8-9 March 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Having been low for the previous four years, attainment was broadly average at the end of Year 6 in 2010 as the result of a significant improvement in mathematics. Evidence from the school's data and the monitoring inspection indicates that pupils currently in Year 6 make good progress and that their attainment is broadly average. As a result, achievement is good. The school has successfully closed the gap in mathematics, where girls previously did not achieve as well as boys. Through the school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, data show that there is no significant variation in the performance of groups by gender, ability or ethnicity. Attainment in



science has improved and is broadly average, as the result of pupils improving their investigative and experimental skills. In Year 4, an investigation into whether ice melts more quickly in fresh or salt water showed that pupils have a good understanding of a fair test.

Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils show impressive levels of sustained concentration in working independently and this was particularly noticeable in guided reading in Year 3. Pupils work successfully in pairs and/or groups, for example in Year 5 when converting the information shown on a graph back into a table.

The school's accurate monitoring of its own performance and evidence from the monitoring inspection confirm that teaching and learning are good. Teachers' planning is detailed and successfully meets the differing learning needs of pupils. A significant strength is the use of 'success criteria' which give pupils a very clear understanding of what they are expected to learn by the end of lessons. Pupils then assess their progress against these 'success criteria', which informs them as to how well they did. Targets in English and mathematics give pupils clear guidance in their next steps in learning, for example, in writing, what they need to do to move from a Level 3a to a Level 4c.

Senior leaders and the governing body play a much stronger role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and its resulting impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Through lesson observations, the monitoring of teachers' planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work, senior leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for improvement. The assessment of pupils' learning is rigorous and this information is used well to monitor the progress of individuals and groups by gender, ability and ethnicity. Where pupils are identified as at risk of falling behind, intervention programmes are immediately put in place. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting identified individuals and/or groups in catching up on prior missed learning.

Through the School Improvement Partner and the Primary Strategy Adviser, the local authority provides effective support for the school, especially in developing the skills of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the areas, for which they have responsibility.

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 Curtis

**Additional Inspector**



## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Improve the overall quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
  - ensuring activities set in lessons are closely matched to pupils' ability
  - providing pupils with high-quality feedback which sets clear targets for improvement
  - making it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson.
  
- Raise standards in science by:
  - using assessment information more effectively to ensure work set in lessons always challenges pupils, whatever their level of ability
  - providing more practical activities in lessons where pupils can work independently and explore ideas for themselves.
  
- Ensure the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress by school leaders, including the governing body, has a greater impact by:
  - focusing on the outcomes of lessons in plans for improvement
  - checking that teaching leads to good learning and progress.