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23 March 2011

Headteacher  
Brookfield Junior School  
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ME20 6YP

Dear Mrs Blewer

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Brookfield 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 also thank the deputy headteacher, the curriculum leader, the pupils and your local authority representative.

Since the last inspection, the context of the school has altered slightly. One of the classes is now a mixed Year 3 and 4 class. All others remain single-age classes. Three new teaching assistants have been appointed and there is additional voluntary help. The school now opens 15 minutes earlier in the morning to allow for the staggered arrival of pupils and 'early work'. This has had a positive impact on improving punctuality and sets a very calm start to the day.

As a result of the inspection on 18 November 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.

Leaders and staff have been firmly focused on improving the achievement of pupils since the last inspection. The impact of their work was not seen in the 2010 results. These fell to a particularly low level as the legacy of past underachievement. However, the proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 who are on track to reach average levels of attainment is higher than it has been in the last four years; this demonstrates a secure and satisfactory improvement. Leaders are, however,

keeping a very close eye on Years 3 to 5 to ensure that this trend is maintained in the future. In the last year, pupils in most groups have been making better progress overall and the few who are still underachieving are closely supported.

The whole school is keenly working to improve writing. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to edit, extend and improve their work. As a result, the quantity and quality of work is better than it was and pupils' achievement is improving securely. This is aided by the sharper target-setting process. Nonetheless, there remains some inconsistency in how well pupils know their individual targets. Although teachers' marking is often detailed, they sometimes miss the opportunity to guide pupils in exactly how to improve their work against their specific targets. As a result, opportunities are missed to accelerate pupils' progress as swiftly as possible.

In the school as a whole, assessment procedures are improving well, and this is an underpinning factor in pupils' steadily increasing rates of progress. Whole-school assessment systems have been reviewed. The new tracking system is used effectively to record pupils' levels of attainment, progress and long-term targets. Staff have become far more accurate in their assessments of pupils' skills and, as a result, their expectations have been raised. Teachers are more accountable for explaining why pupils do and do not make the expected progress. Systems to aid effective assessment are now understood and used consistently. This is a considerable improvement on what the deputy headteacher described as 'the hotch potch of the past'.

There has been steady improvement in the quality of teaching, with more good and occasionally outstanding lessons. The emphasis has been on helping pupils to have more fun, as well as doing more meaningful and practical work. One pupil explained it like this: 'We are definitely more active now.' Presentation of work is much neater and pupils have greater independence. Pupils agree that mathematics, writing and science are more fun. This was evident in the lessons seen. Pupils worked well in ability groups on aspects of mathematics and enjoyed such things as using large protractors outside to carefully measure different angles while others chalked up grids on the pavement and moved numbers to help them to understand multiplication by powers of ten. In several lessons, pupils were busily working on persuasive arguments in readiness for the special 'Write on Wednesday' whole-school advertising workshop. It was evident that pupils were developing a rich vocabulary, which is helping them to write interestingly.

There has been good progress in improving the curriculum in terms of basic skills but a slower development in improving the cultural and spiritual elements. Links between subjects are now securely established. Pupils are proud of their new partnership with a school in Mombasa.

The school is building its capacity to improve securely, especially as the roles of leaders have been more clearly defined. Current expertise is shared effectively to improve the proportion of good and better lessons. The development plans and self-

evaluation process have been strengthened and form a secure base upon which the school can improve. This is aided by the helpful support from the local authority, who have worked closely on improving teaching and learning.

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

Wendy Simmons

**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve standards in English, especially writing, mathematics and science, by raising expectations about the quality, quantity and accuracy of pupils' work.
- Use the current expertise to improve the proportion of good and better lessons.
- Broaden and enrich the curriculum to support pupils' progress in spiritual and cultural development, and increase their enjoyment and excitement in learning.