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Mrs H O'dea
Great Wakering Primary School
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Dear Mrs O'Dea

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Great Wakering Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 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 pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body for our phone discussion and the local authority representatives for their time and involvement as well.

Since the last inspection there have been a number of staff changes. The substantive headteacher retired in July 2010 after a long period of absence due to ill health commencing February 2010. The deputy headteacher was on maternity leave. The assistant headteacher led the school with support from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body until the substantive headteacher started in September 2010. There is one newly qualified appointment.

As a result of the inspection on 14–15 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Slow but steady progress is being made in raising attainment across the school. The emphasis which the school has rightly put on raising standards and accelerating progress in writing is starting to have a positive impact. In the majority of classes, planning takes into account the different needs of both individuals and groups within the classes. The school is paying particular attention to improving the progress which boys make. The use of more technology in lessons and texts specifically targeted at gaining boys' attention is ensuring that pupils are actively engaged in



their learning and, consequently, their achievement and the progress they make is increasing. There are greater opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have learnt in their literacy lessons in their writing across all subjects in the curriculum. This is particularly pertinent for pupils in Year 2 where good progress is being made in raising attainment through the use of writing across other subjects. Teachers' own presentation has improved, although this remains inconsistent and patchy across the school. The progress of pupils overall in mathematics is more limited. The school has plans in place for raising staff awareness and expectations in this area of the curriculum. Two whole school days specifically dedicated to the teaching of mathematics are planned and the school is working closely with the local authority consultant in supporting pupils' achievement and progress. This said, the predicted percentage of more able pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 reaching the higher levels of attainment has improved in the last year.

The quality of teaching is also improving, with more lessons judged as good. Teachers have a clearer understanding about assessment and its use. This, along with a more accurate analysis of what pupils achieve, means that teachers are more aware of what their pupils need to do to improve in order to raise attainment still further. While some teachers have understood and are clearer about the need for them to raise what they expect from pupils, others have not raised their expectations high enough and there are still inconsistencies in teachers' demands. Where teachers are challenging and demanding more of their pupils, they in turn are responding positively to the increased challenge, and achievement and attainment are improving. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils to help them to improve their work is variable and not consistent across the school.

The local authority provides effective support for the school. Local authority advisors have worked closely with the leadership team in monitoring improvements and providing expertise.

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

Susan Vale

Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in mathematics by:
 - extending planned opportunities to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum.

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in writing by:
 - ensuring planning takes account of different groups within a class, and especially boys
 - setting targets for pupils which are frequently evaluated and reviewed, to ensure that they are being met
 - extending planned opportunities to use writing across the curriculum
 - ensuring teachers model high quality presentation in pupils' books and when writing on the interactive whiteboard.

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by;
 - ensuring that information from assessment is used to plan activities which closely match the interests of individuals or groups of pupils
 - improving the quality of marking to ensure pupils are fully aware of their next steps for learning and to support teachers' planning.