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28 March 2011

Mrs S Stelling
Headteacher
Langley Moor Primary School
Brandon Lane
Langley Moor
Durham
DH7 8LL

Dear Mrs Stelling,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Langley Moor 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 discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and senior staff for giving time to talk with me. Please also thank the pupils I met with who gave up part of their lunchtime to give me some good insights of how recent improvements are increasing their enjoyment of learning..

As a result of the inspection on 24 November 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a Newly Qualified Teacher, who took up post in September 2010. A supply teacher has been appointed to the Reception class, since the start of this term, to cover the unavoidable absence of a permanent member of staff.

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 improvement.

Pupils' achievement is improving. This is a result of actions taken by the school to accelerate progress in writing and mathematics at both key stages and in pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds in Key Stage 1. New assessment procedures and clearly defined expectations for marking and feedback to pupils have had a noticeable impact on the quality of their work and on how well they improve on their first efforts. More-regular and targeted teaching of letters and sounds to pupils at the end of Year 2 is reducing gaps in the knowledge of older children in Key Stage 1 and ensuring that all are equipped with early reading and writing skills. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are benefiting from more closely targeted tasks, though the most-able pupils are not always fully challenged by the tasks set. Nevertheless, pupils' work and the school's tracking data show that the majority of pupils are on course to meet

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their targets at the end of the year. The results of teachers' assessments in Year 6 last year showed a rise in attainment in both English and mathematics to above average, with a good rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics.

Teachers are providing more writing activities which link to other subjects, although they are not routinely planning for this in their medium-terms plans. For example, pupils have had some good opportunities to write about the life of Anne Frank and to explain the purpose and impact of Fairtrade. Some teachers are regularly designing activities so that pupils work collaboratively on investigations and practical tasks and take a lead in their learning. This way of working fires pupils' enthusiasm and increases their rate of learning well, but is not consistently used in all classes. Opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of life in other countries and in British society have increased well. The school has formed links with schools in Sri Lanka, France and in Bradford. Since the previous inspection the school has gained the Intermediate International Schools award.

Senior leaders have established rigorous assessment and tracking systems to improve the monitoring of pupils' learning. They have made staff aware of their accountability for raising pupils' attainment and have provided well-structured programmes and support to enable staff to improve their expertise, including forming links with a neighbouring school to share good practice. Staff are now more accurate in their assessments and increasingly use their knowledge of pupils' learning to devise activities that challenge and stretch all groups of pupils. Since the beginning of the school year senior staff have held progress meetings with all teachers to identify pupils who are at risk of underachievement so that interventions can be put in place to help pupils catch up. This is another innovation which is having a positive impact on the attainment of pupils.

The school's robust monitoring of strategies to raise attainment and improve the quality of teaching and learning is ensuring that staff are supported to embed the most-effective methods. The headteacher has devised a regular timetable of monitoring activities for senior staff and members of the governing body which cover all aspects of teaching and learning. This is helping the school identify quickly what is working and where further support and training are needed. The result is that a strong culture of support and professional dialogue is developing which helps the school to identify and share good practice effectively. Members of the governing body are fully involved in this process and have contributed well by holding the school to account for improvements. The cycle of monitoring, evaluation and feedback is increasing the school's capacity for improvement by enabling it to respond promptly to any identified weaknesses.

The local authority has provided good support for the school through training, advice and funding to allow staff to learn from good practice in the school with which it is partnered.

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

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment, especially in Key Stage 1 and in writing and in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring assessment information is used more effectively in planning work to match pupils' needs
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum
 - providing pupils with more-frequent opportunities to engage in practical and investigative activities and to develop independent learning skills
 - ensuring that all leaders, including governors, rigorously monitor the implementation and impact of strategies to raise standards.

- Develop pupils' understanding of the multicultural make-up of modern British society and of different communities abroad.