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30 March 2011

Mrs J Chevaugon  
Headteacher  
Blyth Horton Grange Primary School  
Kitty Brewster  
Blyth  
Northumberland  
NE24 4RE

Dear Mrs Chevaugon,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Blyth Horton Grange Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 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 the Interim Executive Board and pupils for meeting with me.

Since the previous inspection, the school has completed its transition from a first school into a primary school. The current Year 6 pupils are the first cohort to have gone right through the school. There has been an increase in staffing and many staff changes, including senior and middle managers.

As a result of the inspection on 7 and 8 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the Interim Executive Board identified in the previous inspection has been sustained. The senior leadership team is now more effective because the staff, who had only just taken up their roles at the time of the previous inspection, have become established and valuable members of the team. The team is now very well coordinated with a very clear sense of purpose and a determination to raise attainment and increase progress. The thorough induction processes have ensured that new members of staff have settled quickly. All these features are building on the capacity to improve at a faster rate.

The refinement of data analysis in reading, writing and mathematics is more efficient. The breakdown to show each year groups' progress, which includes analysis of overall progress half termly as well as that of more- and less-able pupils, is working well, as are the progress meetings based on the analysis that pinpoints individual pupils' slower rates of progress.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This analysis shows that progress remains inconsistent across different subjects and year groups but there is an increasing proportion of good and some outstanding progress of more-able pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6. The 2010 national assessments in Key Stage 1 show a rise in attainment in all subjects, although it remains below average. The school did not have a Year 6 cohort in 2010 so there were no national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2. The inspection confirms the better rates of progress through the school. In all lessons, there is more-careful planning of different tasks in group work to match pupils' needs. In the best teaching, the expectations of more-able pupils are very high and pupils enjoy rising to the challenge and reaching their goals. In some lessons teachers do not check the more-able pupils' work regularly enough to check that they are building on previous learning, which reduces their rate of progress.

The school has made outstanding progress in providing guidance for pupils to help them improve. All lessons begin with an outline of self-evaluation indicators for good or outstanding progress and teachers regularly refer to them. Pupils are very confident in identifying their own progress and justifying their evaluation. Pupils also have a very good understanding of which sub-level of the National Curriculum they are working at and enjoy responding to teachers' comments in their written work.

There has been a thorough programme of training for teaching assistants. The reallocation of their responsibilities and the extension of their hours to include time for dialogue with teachers are contributing to making them more effective in supporting pupils. The inspection identified variations in the quality of this support, but it is at least satisfactory and there are some outstanding features.

There has been mixed progress with the areas for development in the Early Years Foundation Stage issues. It has been better in the Nursery than in Reception. In both age groups there is now a much better range of outdoor and indoor activities with a good balance across different areas of learning. Children are now more confident in choosing independent activities and concentrate well on their tasks. There are inconsistencies in the quality of whole-class or group sessions across the unit. In the best sessions, the content is interesting and matches the children's needs and interests well, for example, making silly soup from logs, dogs and frogs to extend awareness of rhyme. In other sessions, teachers do not provide enough guidance to children at the beginning of independent learning sessions to identify the challenges of the different learning opportunities. At the end of some sessions there is not enough feedback given to individual children about the progress they have made, nor is enough time given for them to talk about their learning. The quality of interaction between adults and individual children varies. In the best, the adults use questioning skilfully to extend children's learning, particularly in using language for thinking and communicating. In the least-successful interactions, adults dominate the activity and the use of questioning is restricted. There are now clear routines for all children and they are more independent and move between the different parts of the unit confidently. The new system of children choosing their own time for taking a snack is an improvement on the previous organisation. Assessment routines are developing but are not used consistently enough to focus on children's specific needs in planning.

The local authority continues to support the school well with several consultants working regularly in the school. The partnership with the school from a neighbouring authority is particularly beneficial. The extension of links with the special school that has just moved to the adjacent site is working well.

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 Margaret Shepherd  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise pupils' attainment by:-
  - ensuring that the work provided for the most able and the least able pupils is accurately matched to their ability and provides sufficient challenge
  - ensuring that pupils are given well-targeted guidance which helps them to improve and are given opportunities to act on the guidance provided
  - improving the skills of the teaching assistants.
  
- Improve the provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:-
  - ensuring that the activities provided for children help them to make progress
  - establishing routines which help children gain independent learning skills.