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5 May 2011

Mr B Turner  
Headteacher  
Yardley Wood Community Primary School  
School Road  
Birmingham  
B14 4ER

Dear Mr Turner

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Yardley Wood Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help that you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information that you provided during the inspection. Please also thank the members of the governing body and pupils that I met.

A new headteacher took up post in January 2011. A long-term supply teacher also began work in January 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 3 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.

The attainment of pupils in the 2010 Key Stage 2 tests remained below average but that represented satisfactory progress, an improvement on previous years. The recently introduced regular formal assessments using the Qualification and Curriculum Authority tests suggest that current standards in English in Year 6 are now broadly average overall, with strengths in reading. Mathematics, however, is not likely to reach the national average this year despite substantial work with pupils to address a legacy of underachievement they experienced in Years 4 and 5. Evidence from my lesson observations are consistent with the school's pupil progress information. They show most year groups and groups of pupils are currently achieving well. A more realistic, and externally moderated, assessment of pupil attainment at Key Stage 1 also shows improvements in attainment since 2010.

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve, as school leaders, with the effective support of local authority consultants, tackle some remaining

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weaknesses. The best lessons address the full range of pupil ability by assigning activities that challenge each pupil with sufficient time for pupils to develop their thinking, practise their skills and work creatively towards a demanding, and interesting, end goal. Teachers have taken on board the advice and guidance from colleagues, the headteacher and local authority consultants. As a result, they have rediscovered their confidence and enjoyment of teaching and have enthusiastically embraced curriculum improvements. These changes have resulted in much more engaging lessons, with more opportunities to develop pupils' basic skills in addition to specific English and mathematics lessons. In most lessons, teachers and support assistants monitor the learning of small groups of children, intervening regularly at a personal level when they spot pupils getting stuck or completing work early. Children are very busy in most lessons because they find the activities to be motivating, so they enjoy their learning and, unsurprisingly, their attendance has sharply improved as a result.

The new headteacher has quickly established a secure and friendly school atmosphere that has encouraged parents and carers to come in to school, for example with daily 'meet and greet' opportunities for parents to meet teachers. This emphasis on welcoming parents and carers has resulted in a marked increase in their participation, including high attendance at parents' evenings, and attendance at Friday assemblies. The deputy headteacher has relished the responsibility of developing a comprehensive approach to improving community cohesion. He has undertaken a thorough audit of school and local needs. This has resulted in a substantial programme of events for pupils and consultation with parents and carers to broaden their awareness of local community needs and responsibilities. The curriculum ensures pupils learn about life in modern multicultural Britain. School leaders and the governing body are re-establishing Yardley Wood at the heart of its local community. There are new opportunities for family learning, for example in information and communication technology and family literacy.

The governing body, teachers and school leaders have high regard for the quality of local authority support that has helped to establish an effective internal school-based capacity for improvement. The new headteacher has refreshed and readjusted the responsibilities of middle managers, resulting in a clear and effective whole-school approach to improving standards together as a team. Staff now confidently share expertise, seek support and offer advice to one another irrespective of seniority.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Cartwright".

Brian Cartwright

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Ensure pupils experience more good lessons by:
  - increasing the challenge, particularly for the more-able
  - reducing the length of time pupils are overly passive in lessons
  - ensuring all lessons contain regular and frequent opportunities for learning to be reviewed and outcomes clarified.
  
- Improve the curriculum by increasing the opportunities pupils have to:
  - apply their literacy, numeracy and other important skills needed for future success
  - be creative, spiritual and interact with other cultures not strongly represented in the immediate community.
  
- Promote community cohesion more effectively by:
  - undertaking an audit to establish the school's community cohesion priorities
  - planning and effectively implementing a set of strategies to improve community cohesion.