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Mrs Frame  
Headteacher  
Riverside Primary School  
St Edmund's Way  
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Dear Mrs Frame

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Riverside Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. My particular thanks go to members of the governing body for their attendance and to you for arranging interviews for me with members of your staff.

Since the last inspection the school has moved to mixed-age classes. Following specialist training, and reflecting the school's extended provision, the school is now able to offer a range of support for pupils whose needs fall within the autistic spectrum.

As a result of the inspection on 10 and 11 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:

satisfactory progress in making improvements.

and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Following the last inspection, attainment in the 2010 national tests fell and was well below average by the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, at that time, attainment was broadly average, although well below in writing at Level 2A. Pupils were not achieving as well as might have been expected. Data showing the value the school added to pupils' learning from their starting points indicated satisfactory progress made by all groups, but for boys and pupils not taking free school meals, good progress was being made. The fairly small cohorts of between 18 and 22 pupils, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, together with a much higher than average mobility rate all have an effect on the interpretation of these data.

Since that time, with reference to the school's well-managed assessment system, attainment has improved in writing by Year 2, so that it is now broadly average. By Year 6 improvements have seen attainment in English rise from well below average to broadly average both at the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. In mathematics, improvement in attainment has been seen at Level 4, with the proportion reaching Level 5 still equal to the national average as it was previously. This now strongly suggests an improvement in pupils' achievement in the targeted areas of writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence in lessons and in the scrutiny of workbooks confirms the satisfactory progress made on these issues. Better use of writing elements from the school's topic approach has ensured that a wider range of writing opportunities is presented. The clearer writing of targets and improvements in marking have supported progress. 'Green for great' and 'pink for think' colour coded marking now celebrates successes and the next steps in writing. However, teachers are still not referring to pupils' targets in their marking or using success criteria in their planning in order that pupils might be helped to analyse their own successes. While the school collects information on the progress of all pupils, it has not analysed it closely enough and only notes where progress is satisfactory but not where it is good in the various year groups.

Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has brought about a gradual improvement. Leaders know that there is more to do to secure consistently good teaching by sharing and supporting good practice. Strengths were noted in sharing learning objectives, detailed questioning, effective use of resources and the use of learning assistants to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In some lessons, learning assistants are not used effectively enough in the early part of the lesson, when whole class teaching is carried out. At the same time, too many teachers only seek responses from pupils who put their hands up and do not gain a wide enough picture of how different groups are learning during lessons. Pupil progress meetings now involve class teachers and senior leaders, tracking pupils' achievement and ensuring all professionals are accountable.

The school has previously benefited from the Improving Schools Programme. This and other programmes put in place by the school's leadership team are beginning to



have an impact on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Subject leaders are now completing book trawls, checking planning, observing teaching and analysing data. Better trained learning assistants, the extension of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into Year 1, more cross-curricular writing opportunities and better challenge in activities set for more-able pupils are all supporting carefully paced progress in order to consolidate improvement. The governing body, which remains a further positive feature of the school, is providing good strategic support, as is the local authority. This confirms the notion that the school is now demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Gavin Jones

**Additional Inspector**



## Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so that learning and achievement are at least good overall by:
  - making sure that lessons are always planned to meet pupils' wide-ranging needs and capabilities
  - ensuring that pupils are always well challenged in lessons, especially the most able in mathematics
  - tightening up the implementation of the behaviour policy so that all staff are clear about how to promote and achieve good behaviour in lessons
  - sharpening up the way that leaders monitor and check the quality of teaching and learning so that staff are given very precise guidance about how to improve.
  
- Raise pupils' attainment and achievement in writing by:
  - providing more opportunities for children in Early Years Foundation Stage to write for different purposes
  - giving older pupils more opportunities to do extended writing
  - providing pupils with clearer writing targets which help them to learn how to write more complex sentences, using descriptive vocabulary
  - helping pupils to check and edit their work so that they make faster progress in learning new skills
  - making sure that teachers refer to pupils' targets when marking their work
  - giving pupils time to respond to the marking comments made by teachers.