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16 May 2011

Mr Carl Braithwaite  
Ollerton Community Primary School  
Whinney Lane  
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Newark  
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Dear Mr Braithwaite

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Since the last inspection, a substantive headteacher has now been appointed. Four middle leaders are either on maternity leave or have only very recently returned to work in a part-time capacity.

As a result of the inspection on 12 October 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.

Senior leaders have placed a strong focus on developing the quality of teaching and learning through implementing a range of strategies. Staff have received training in using assessment information to plan challenging learning activities and in helping pupils become independent learners. Monitoring of the quality of teaching has included paired observations with teachers from a partner school and with representatives of the local authority, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils to establish their views of what learning is like at the school. Monitoring of teachers' planning by senior leaders shows that teachers are now meeting the school's increased expectations of them. Assessment information is used by teachers to plan different learning tasks of appropriate challenge for pupils' varying starting points. Pupils' work is now regularly marked, with the spelling and grammar of older pupils diligently corrected. The school is still considering how far down the school

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this practice should extend as it is anxious not to deter the emerging writing skills of younger pupils. The school's monitoring shows the quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory, which was confirmed by the lessons visited during this inspection. Pupils' behaviour was good in the lessons visited. They had good relationships with each other and with adults and worked well independently.

The school has gone to considerable lengths to devise exciting and stimulating ways to engage pupils, particularly boys, in writing tasks. These include bringing into school a planetarium, drama activities and an adult storyteller to work with higher attaining boys. In another imaginative activity, the school recreated a World War II air raid shelter underground in the school boiler room, complete with posters from that period, other artefacts and the sound of an air raid siren to set the scene for a subsequent poetry-writing task. Assessment information shows that pupils' attainment in writing has improved as a result of this focus although it is still low in comparison to the national average. The curriculum has been enriched by a number of themed weeks to enable pupils to learn about the local community and life in communities nationally and internationally.

The school has robust tracking systems which give it a good picture of individual and collective performance and which enable teachers to target intervention strategies effectively. Tracking shows that progress this year in almost all year groups is better than in the previous year and boys are making better progress now in their writing than they were. Pupils join the school with well below average attainment and do not make sufficiently rapid progress to close the gap with the national average by the time they complete Key Stage 2. Consequently, achievement, although improving, is inadequate and the school is predicting the 2011 test results will remain low.

A range of enticing prizes are offered to pupils to reward good attendance. Tough sanctions have been implemented to address the poor attendance of others and these include issuing fixed-penalty fines to parents and carers and pursuing court action. As yet, these strategies have had little impact in reducing the persistent absenteeism of a small number of pupils. It is hard to see what more the school can do to improve attendance, which is stubbornly low and showing little sign of improving.

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

David Anstead  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- With a particular focus on the attainment of boys, raise standards in English by:
  - increasing opportunities for writing in all subjects
  - ensuring teachers plan learning tasks that inspire boys to write
  - ensuring that there is a clear focus on the monitoring of boys' writing in all subjects.
  
- Improve attendance by reminding parents and carers of children with irregular attendance of their legal responsibilities.
  
- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensuring in planning lessons that assessment information is used to plan learning tasks that are suitably challenging for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that in the marking of pupils' work, spelling and grammatical errors are corrected in all subjects.
  
- Improve the curriculum by providing pupils with more planned opportunities to appreciate the nature of cultural diversity and the customs and beliefs of others.