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Mr R Dedicoat
Headteacher
Whitton Community Primary School
Shakespeare Road
Ipswich
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Dear Mr Dedicoat

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Whitton Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please thank the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body who found time to meet with me.

As a result of the inspection on 27 and 28 January 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.

Since the last inspection, the number of children joining the school has risen and, currently, there are 260 pupils on roll. A new, permanent deputy headteacher and a newly qualified teacher have been appointed. A teacher has taken full responsibility for coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Subject leaders and managers of key stages have been made permanent and, as a result of training tailored to their needs, they fully understand their roles and responsibilities. These changes, and the continued leadership of the headteacher, have significantly increased the school's capacity to make further improvements.

In 2010, a rise in attainment in Key Stage 1 continued a five-year trend of improvement. In Key Stage 2, attainment declined; the percentage of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected levels in English and mathematics fell below national floor targets. However, based on their well below average starting points, this represented satisfactory progress. This year, senior leaders expect the trend of improvement in Key Stage 1 to be maintained and the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining Level 4 or above in English and mathematics to be much closer to the



targets it has set for itself. Detailed tracking data shows that the majority of pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are making at least satisfactory progress, although some pupils make slower progress in reading in Year 5 and in mathematics in Year 4.

Regular lesson monitoring, validated by joint observations with the School Improvement Partner, confirm that the school is moving closer to meeting the target set in the last inspection of over 80% of teaching in English and mathematics lessons to be good or better. Observations of lessons by HMI and senior leaders found that teaching and its impact on pupils' learning is at least satisfactory, and at times good. Pupils make rapid progress when they are actively engaged in practical tasks, working together in groups, and when learning is made interesting and enjoyable. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils worked together as 'detectives' to solve problems by eliminating irrelevant clues; boys, in particular, responded well to the challenge and to the illustrations on the interactive whiteboard. Progress in English is slower when the pace of learning drops and when more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and when lower attaining pupils have few opportunities to reinforce their basic punctuation and grammar.

Procedures to identify pupils in need of additional support early in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have been strengthened. Staff now know who to approach to make these arrangements. The new coordinator has a clear understanding of her role and is fully committed to improving provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A range of support is provided for pupils on a one-to-one basis by an experienced teaching assistant. Evaluation shows that, in most cases, this is accelerating their progress. Parents are increasingly involved in the review of individual education plans and more of them are attending 'learning together Fridays' to find out how to support their child's learning.

Senior leaders are demonstrating their commitment to raising achievement by routinely monitoring performance data and the quality of teaching. They are forging stronger links with parents and carers, and the local community, to gain their support in ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they can. The governing body ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are secure and the school continues to offer a safe and stimulating environment in which to learn. The turbulence caused by staffing changes and temporary appointments has been addressed. Middle leaders say that, following training and guidance from the headteacher, they feel more empowered to contribute to monitoring and evaluation of subjects and whole-school improvement planning.

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

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring teaching in English and mathematics is good in at least 80% of lessons, and meeting more precisely the learning needs of different groups of pupils, in particular boys, those with special educational needs and those who are able and talented.

- Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs by strengthening the systems in place for the early identification and support of all pupils with additional needs, sharpening approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the support provided for individuals and groups and working closely with parents to involve them more in discussing and supporting their children's progress.

- Extend the role played by middle leaders in improving provision and raising attainment by providing them with training and guidance so that they perform their roles effectively, and involving them in a systematic monitoring and evaluation programme for all curriculum subjects and key aspects of the school's work.