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10 June 2011

Ms R Brumby  
North Walsham Junior School  
Manor Road  
North Walsham  
NR28 9HG

Dear Ms Brumby

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of North Walsham Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 June 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 two members of the Governing Body and subject leaders who found time to meet with me.

As a result of the inspection on 16 June 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.

Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher and two newly qualified teachers have joined the school. Internal appointments include an assistant headteacher and a subject leader for English. This has helped to stabilise the period of turbulence noted at the time of the last inspection and is providing additional capacity to make further improvements. Attainment and the progress made by pupils have risen over the past two years, reflecting the school's focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to raise achievement. However, the percentage of pupils meeting or exceeding national expectations by the end of Year 6 remains below the national average. Senior leaders acknowledge that pupils' progress needs accelerating further to meet the challenging targets the school has set itself. Current tracking data indicates that progress continues to improve and, this year, a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are predicted to achieve national expectations in English and in mathematics.

Observations of all teachers, carried out jointly by HMI and the headteacher, confirmed that the vast majority of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. All teachers share positive relations with pupils, manage behaviour well and use

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interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy learning together in small groups and know how to gauge their progress against general targets matched to their abilities. However, they often end up doing the same task planned by the teacher. This means that, for some pupils, learning is restricted because the work is too challenging or too easy. Teaching assistants are usually suitably deployed to support less able pupils, but when whole-class tasks are too challenging for pupils they tend to do the work for them.

The vast majority of teachers' marking includes praise and short, sharp targets to help pupils take the next steps. This is helping them to understand what they need to do to improve their work, but not all teachers provide time in subsequent lessons to check that pupils have responded to the recommendations they have made. Despite improvements, marking is not fully addressing weaknesses in pupils' presentation of their work: common errors in spelling and grammar persist and pupils' poor handwriting and graphical skills are often overlooked. The majority of pupils' books remain untidy, mainly because teachers do not apply agreed rules for presenting and completing work. A few teachers provide writing frames to help pupils set out their work neatly, and also reward pupils for good quality work with stars or stickers, but this is not consistent across the school. Written work is displayed in corridors but few classrooms have displays of exemplary work to help pupils understand the expectations of them or encourage them to present their work well.

Discussions with senior leaders and a sample of subject leaders confirmed their collective drive to improve classroom practice in order to raise achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Improvements in marking and assessment have not extended into science. The school continues to work collaboratively with the local authority and external consultants to increase its effectiveness. School improvement plans include suitable challenging literacy and numeracy targets. Senior leaders' regular lesson monitoring is leading to improvements in teaching but is not sufficiently focused on addressing weaknesses in pupils' presentation, spelling and grammar. The deputy headteacher, who has assumed responsibility for coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has identified that further planning and targeted support from teaching assistants is needed to ensure that they make similar progress to others. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements remain secure.

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 June 2009**

- In teaching, focus more rigorously on setting out written work in English, mathematics and science and on the basic skills of punctuation and handwriting in English.
  
- Ensure that all teachers, when marking pupils' work, give sharply focused written advice about how to improve basic skills, and then follow it up to ensure a strong impact on pupils' work.
  
- Ensure that pupils of all abilities receive short sharp targets, so they themselves are enabled to make a contribution to accelerating their own progress.