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20 June 2011

Mrs S Holroyd
Headteacher
Werneth Primary School
Coppice Street
Oldham
Lancashire
OL8 4BL

Dear Mrs Holroyd,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Werneth Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Also, thank you to the staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body, for the meetings and discussions which took place.

Since the last inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured and several staff changes have occurred, especially in Key Stage 2.

As a result of the inspection on 2 February 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 satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The results of teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in 2010 at the end of Year 6 show an improvement on the outcomes of the previous year. In particular, the combined percentages of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above in English and mathematics rose sharply to be above the government floor targets. Current indications from school tracking data show Year 6 are attaining lower standards in English and mathematics. However, taking the starting points of both cohorts into account, the data clearly show improved rates of progress, which is accelerating due to improvements in the quality of teaching. Scrutiny of school data shows that across the school, there is evidence of similar improvement in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is variation between classes and across subjects as a result of previous patchy learning, but a sound start has been made to ensure that pupils are able to make up for lost time.

The school's senior leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching. This has been achieved through regular monitoring and well-targeted professional development for teachers. The local authority provides good support in this regard. There have been a

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number of well-managed staff changes, including improvements to the deployment of teachers to different year groups. Of particular note, is the success of leaders' initiatives to improve the teaching of mathematics, which was highlighted as a key issue at the last inspection. With the help of local authority consultants, training has been provided to improve the way mathematics is taught, with a focus on increasing opportunities for pupils to learn through practical problem-solving activities. Also, a specialist mathematics teacher has been employed to provide one-to-one tuition and this has given many pupils a boost to their learning.

The outcome of leaders' actions is an improved profile to the quality of teaching with a greater proportion of good lessons. During this monitoring visit, parts of 11 mathematics lessons were seen. These were characterised by a high number of practical and fun tasks provided for pupils to solve mathematical problems. Pupils who spoke to the inspector said that they enjoy learning in this way. Teachers present learning with enthusiasm and pupils respond with good levels of interest and concentration. Effective use is made of a range of resources, including computers, digital projectors and mathematical equipment, such as calculators. Effective support from teaching assistants helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make similar progress to their peers.

The improvement to the quality of teaching is not matched by similar levels of improvement to the amount of progress made by pupils. While lessons are more interesting with more-active involvement in lessons for pupils, there are inconsistencies in the expectations for learning. Teachers' planning shows clear aims for the overall learning of the class but lacks specific step-by-step identification of the expectations for different groups, such as the more able pupils. As a result, the use of ongoing assessment to check systematically on pupils' progress is hugely variable and some pupils are not stretched sufficiently to maximise their achievement in a given time or lesson. This inconsistency is also present in the quality of teachers' marking and in the use of targets for pupils' learning, both of which were points for improvement at the last inspection. Pupils' books are regularly marked but feedback to pupils about how to improve their work is not used effectively. The expectations for pupils to present their work neatly and tidily in books are too low.

Pupils' attendance is much improved since the last inspection. Leaders' efforts to raise the profile of the importance of a good attendance have successfully resulted in far higher rates of attendance and significantly fewer persistent absences. Pupils are very aware of the need to attend regularly and data show that parents and carers are supporting the school by opting for fewer holidays in school time.

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
Mr John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

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Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 2 February 2010

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by:
 - increasing pupils' progress in mathematics
 - matching work more closely to pupils' differing needs, particularly for the more able.

- Increase the proportion of good and better lessons by:
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to be actively engaged in their learning
 - using marking and target-setting more consistently to help pupils understand how to improve their work.

- Improve attendance further by:
 - working with parents and carers to investigate and address key issues relating to health and absence
 - reviewing, in consultation with pupil groups, the range and impact of incentives to improve attendance and raise pupils' awareness of the importance of attending school regularly
 - reducing extended absence by continuing to make parents and carers aware of the school's policy.