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Mrs T O'Donnell
Headteacher
Epping Primary School
Coronation Hill
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CM16 5DU

Dear Mrs O'Donnell

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also convey my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and to the staff and pupils.

Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher has left the school. The serving deputy headteacher acted as headteacher until the substantive post holder resumed her duties. The school has moved into new accommodation and the number of pupils on roll is steadily increasing. A curriculum review has taken place and the curriculum is more closely linked to skills pupils need to secure better learning. Learning support assistants are now line managed directly by the class teachers on a day-to-day basis.

As a result of the inspection on 16 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 satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Average attainment coupled with satisfactory learning and progress, which is improving as pupils approach the end of Key Stage 2, is securing satisfactory achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress because of the well-targeted intervention they receive that successfully supports each step in their learning. The school correctly identifies any groups of pupils who are at risk of underperforming so that any gaps are being narrowed.



Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some that is good. Teachers are starting to make more effective use of available data to plan lessons which better address the needs of different groups of pupils. In a good mathematics lesson observed, pupils were challenged to work out the solution to problems on their own and were empowered to take on responsibility for their own learning. The lesson consisted of a range of activities which allowed different groups of pupils to make better than expected progress. In less effective lessons, teaching does not target all groups of pupils and their rate of progress is slowed down. Many pupils are aware of their levels of attainment and targets. Where marking is good, pupils are praised, encouraged and informed as to how to progress to the next level, but the quality of marking is not yet consistent across the school.

Pupils are consulted on the content of the curriculum and the decision to implement a more pupil-led and creative curriculum is regarded by leaders and managers as a positive step forward, but it is too early to assess the impact of this on pupil outcomes. Unforeseen circumstances have led to literacy currently being overseen by senior leaders. Prior to this arrangement, additional support from the local authority in developing literacy across the school was provided to the literacy leader. The absence of a substantive post holder for leading on literacy has restricted progress in this area to some degree. However, the school has conducted an audit among the pupils and has identified a need to incorporate more drama and role-play work into the curriculum from September 2011. The school's numeracy provision has been developed through the introduction of a Guided Mathematics programme to provide greater challenge for more-able pupils and the school has started to place a greater emphasis on practising oral and mental mathematics.

The quality of support provided in the classroom by learning support assistants is not consistent. Where it is most effective, staff work well with pupils, know their current and expected levels of progress, and facilitate their learning by ensuring they understand the work and allow them to attempt the tasks on their own. Learning support assistants appreciate the training they have been offered, some of which includes specialist training in supporting pupils with dyslexia. This training has enabled support assistants to work more collaboratively with class teachers in the planning, preparation and assessment of work.

Leaders, managers and the governing body demonstrate an awareness of barriers to progress and have started to take more decisive action in their desire to drive forward school improvement. Strategies now being implemented are starting to show signs of improvement but it is too early to assess the impact of these actions on pupil outcomes.

The school appreciates the effective support it has received from the local authority, particularly in the development of literacy and numeracy, and is acting on the findings of a recent local authority review. The School Improvement Partner has also worked closely with leaders and managers to identify existing strengths and areas for development.

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 Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - better matching targets and learning activities to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that marking and assessment provides sufficient guidance and opportunities for pupils to improve their work.

- Improve the curriculum by:
 - identifying and sharing the best literacy and numeracy learning programmes
 - having effective strategies to develop literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

- Make the best use of general classroom learning support by:
 - providing an appropriate balance of whole class and individual/group learning using support staff
 - ensuring all support staff are sufficiently well trained and proficient to contribute effectively in the classroom.