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Mrs Stanley  
Headteacher  
Red Hall Primary School  
Zoar Street  
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Dudley  
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Dear Mrs Stanley

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Red Hall Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 July 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you and other school leaders provided before and during the inspection.

Since the school's last inspection, one of the two deputy headteachers has retired. The leadership team has been restructured to include leaders of different age groups. The school was scheduled for a new building in 2012. Under the government's new arrangements, this plan has been withdrawn. The school is currently considering new plans to improve the existing buildings.

As a result of the inspection on 7 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.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school has introduced a suitable system for assessing attainment and tracking children's progress from their point of entry. Almost all children in Reception have made good progress this year, especially in numeracy. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved since 2009 when it was low. Initial results in the 2011 Key Stage 2 national tests show broadly average attainment in English but disappointingly low attainment in mathematics. These pupils have made satisfactory progress, but not enough to make up for past underachievement. In other year groups, pupils are making



progress that is satisfactory and in some cases good. The very large majority are reaching levels expected for their ages in English and mathematics.

The whole-school focus on writing has had a discernable impact on standards. Pupils write extensively in a range of subjects. They take pride and care in their written work. Pupils know the level they are working at and chart their progress towards the next level. Targets set for them are challenging.

The school has pinpointed weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. It is taking appropriate steps to address them by: introducing a new scheme of work; providing staff with additional support and guidance to boost their confidence in teaching the subject; and advertising for a new subject leader to drive the subject forward with ambition. This is work in progress but there are some promising signs of improvement. In some classes, pupils work independently and enthusiastically on tasks that are challenging yet suited well to their needs and abilities. This is not the case in all classes.

Attendance rates are average. Incentive and reward schemes are proving successful. The attendance policy is due for urgent revision as the school has identified that too many parents and carers are taking term-time holidays. The vast majority of pupils show good attitudes to learning. Where good teaching captures their interest and inspires them, they behave well and work productively. In a very few classes, weak teaching does not take into account sufficiently pupils' differing abilities. Instructions are unclear and they lose interest. The leadership team is monitoring teaching regularly to improve performance. Suitable strategies are used to achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching. A very few staff receive criticism reluctantly but confidence is growing in focusing on learning and holding all teachers accountable for pupils' outcomes.

The headteacher and deputy observe teaching regularly and provide balanced feedback on strengths and weaknesses. Teachers know what they need to work on to improve. Additional training and support are provided, tailored to need. The local authority provides good support, for example, in helping the school to improve assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Link teachers from local secondary schools work alongside teaching staff to develop their skills in teaching specialist subjects such as French. Phase leaders contribute by checking curriculum planning and sampling pupils' work. All staff use data extensively to monitor pupils' progress and pinpoint where additional support or intervention is needed. Regular meetings with all class teachers provide a forum to discuss the performance of individuals and groups of pupils so that no-one slips through the net. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. It provides the school with a clear picture of pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and used to inform future planning for improvement. All of the areas for improvement highlighted in the last inspection are being addressed diligently. The leadership team shares a collective understanding of the need to press on with the improvement agenda resolutely, but with less conviction in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is better placed

than it was at its last inspection to raise achievement. It demonstrates satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Linda Killman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics by:
  - improving teachers' understanding of how to plan lessons so that tasks are well matched to ability and meet the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those capable of doing harder work
  - developing curriculum planning so that there are planned opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their core language and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Improve leadership and management skills at all levels so that all staff are able to make a significant contribution to school self-evaluation and improvement planning by:
  - making sure that members of the senior leadership team rigorously monitor the classroom performance of all teachers
  - developing the analysis of pupil performance data by the phase and subject leaders to provide a clear picture of the progress of cohorts, different classes and groups of pupils.
- Improve assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that staff can easily monitor individual children's progress by:
  - establishing starting levels for each child to be used as a point from which to assess children's progress through the Nursery
  - improve the use of assessment data in tracking children's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage by simplifying the recording systems.
- Raise attendance by:
  - improving systems for early checking on reasons for absence
  - working with parents to help them to recognise the value of sending their children to school regularly.