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24 June 2011

Mr R Bowley
Headteacher
Hunningley Primary School
Hunningley Lane
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 3DT

Dear Mr Bowley,

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 June 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please give my thanks also to the pupils, members of staff and governors who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 8 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 pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was broadly average in 2010 and the school exceeded its predicted success rates for pupils attaining Level 4+ in the national tests. The data suggest that the pupils made the level of progress that might reasonably have been expected, given their starting points. The school's data suggest that the pupils' attainment is currently average overall. There are also indications that the pupils are beginning to make better rates of progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

The lessons observed, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with the pupils indicate that the pupils have positive attitudes to learning and respond to the teaching well, so that they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in lessons. The pupils' behaviour in these lessons was good and older pupils particularly sustained their attention very well on the work set. The teachers applied various techniques to check the progress being made by the pupils and the practices were apparent consistently in different lessons. The teachers did not, however, build systematically on what the checks revealed, so that the pupils were not often challenged to extend their learning or drawn more closely into the topic, for example, through more-targeted questioning or requests to offer comments and ideas. The marking of pupils' work is undertaken diligently. The comments written by the teachers are always supportive. Some comments provide clear and precise guidance, both for what has been

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done well and how to improve, but many are more general. As a result of those factors, the pupils' understanding of and ability to talk about their learning varied from being very limited to reasonably specific. Often, the pupils lacked the vocabulary and frameworks of ideas for doing so, although a recently introduced learning 'tracker' offers the potential to provide both.

The governing body demonstrates clear commitment and a willingness to tackle the issues identified at the last inspection. It has, for example, supported the leaders and managers at the school well in ensuring that the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have full and equal access now to a high-quality learning environment, both indoors and out. There is now a much higher level of engagement of the governing body in the work of the school. The closer working relationships have led to a better awareness of the detail of what the school does. That awareness has in turn enabled the governing body to question the school's leaders and managers more confidently and astutely.

The hard-working staff have focused very well on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The school's response to the area for improvement relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage was emphatic and, as a result of a highly significant commitment by the governing body and senior leaders, the inadequacies noted at the last inspection have been eradicated. The action taken indicates the school's ability to take rapid and radical action when necessary. The school's response to tackling the other areas for improvement has been measured and considered. That approach has led to consistently used practices in teaching and has sustained the progress made with the improvements. The pupils' learning is back on track after a decline in 2009. The school's improved tracking and analysis of pupils' attainment have provided the leaders and managers with a more exact view of where the pupils are not making sufficient progress, such as in mathematics in certain year groups. It has facilitated carefully considered actions to increase the pupils' progress, although it is too early for the actions taken to have had their full effect. Self-evaluation is well considered. The outcomes are understood by the staff and lead to thoughtful action. The school has sought external support and ideas, including from neighbouring schools and the local authority, to identify more-successful practice. While the governing body's understanding of the work of the school and the data about pupils' learning and progress has improved, it is not setting its own expectations for these aspects sufficiently to fully carry out its responsibility for steering the strategic direction of the school.

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 Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 8 February 2010

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that individual pupils understand clearly what they have to do next in lessons to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding
 - providing all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the same good quality learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors
 - checking much more closely on what pupils are actually learning and achieving from the activities provided for them
 - making sure governors understand;
 - how to measure the progress pupils are making from year-to-year
 - how to challenge the school's leaders about the school's overall performance.