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30 June 2011

Mrs Zerina Slade  
Interim Headteacher  
Burnt Oak Primary School  
Richmond Road  
Gillingham  
ME7 1LS

Dear Mrs Slade

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Burnt Oak 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 phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the pupils for their helpfulness and their readiness to talk to me about their work, particularly those pupils whom I interviewed.

Since the last inspection, the substantive headteacher has left, and the school has been run by an interim headteacher from another local primary school since last November. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed with effect from September 2011. The school is currently without an inclusion manager, and has not been able to make an appointment for September. The role is currently being covered by the deputy headteacher.

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:

inadequate progress in making improvements

*and*

inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Pupils' achievement has not improved since the last inspection. Teacher assessments show that results at the end of both key stages have declined this year, particularly in English at Key Stage 2 and in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1, and attainment continues to be low in Years 2, 5 and 6. Assessments for Years 1, 3 and 4 show a better picture of attainment although still below expectations. This is reflected in the work seen in pupils' books. School data and lesson observations undertaken by inspectors, the school and by the local authority, show that pupils' progress is not rapid enough to recover lost ground in their learning. In all year groups other than Year 3 and Year 4, progress is below expectations, and particularly weak in mathematics in Year 6. Overall, progress is inadequate and attainment is low, and this means that pupils' achievement currently is inadequate.

Teaching and learning overall are inadequate, a view mirrored by schools' and the local authority's monitoring. Lessons often lack pace and challenge, and there are few opportunities for pupils to work together. Pupils say that they prefer lessons like art and drama to mathematics and literacy, because in the former they can express themselves and have fun. There have been clear improvements in the systems for assessment since the last inspection, but this is still not used consistently to plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs in lessons. Although pupils are grouped by ability, they are often given the same tasks to complete. When different ability groups are given different work, this is not always well managed. More able pupils spoke of being given challenging work and then receiving no support in completing it, as the class teacher worked with the less able groups for the rest of the lesson. Teachers do not make enough use of targeted questioning to assess what pupils understand as they go along, and this means that they are unaware that pupils do not know how to tackle the tasks set them. Opportunities for partner talk or group discussions are often missed, and this, combined with the lack of targeted questioning, means that some pupils make very little contribution to their lesson.

Class teachers and teaching assistants work well with their focus groups and give them good support. However, they are not sufficiently aware of what is happening in the rest of the class, and do not expect high enough standards for pupils' application to their work and behaviour in class. Consequently, pupils often work on their tasks at a slow pace and chat about other things as they do so. This limits their learning. In Key Stage 1 classrooms are often noisy, whilst in Key Stage 2 lessons are sometimes disrupted because of the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys. Teaching assistants make sure that these pupils do not pose a threat to themselves or others, but this often means that they have to leave the focus groups with whom they are working which interrupts their learning and that of others.

The school has made satisfactory progress in improving its systems for marking and target setting. The marking policy is applied consistently across the school, and pupils understand that teachers will be highlighting the strengths in their work and indicating areas for improvement. However, while some comments are very helpful to pupils, others, such as 'think more about your work', are too vague and do not



help pupils to move forward. Additionally, although some teachers expect pupils to carry out corrections, or to enter a dialogue with them about their work, others do not. A consistent system of target setting is in place in every class, and pupils know what their targets are. The language used for the targets is sometimes too difficult for the youngest pupils to understand.

There has been a decline in standards of behaviour since the last inspection. While most pupils are friendly and well behaved, there is a significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 2, mainly boys, who have behavioural difficulties. Exclusion rates have risen, and some lessons in Key Stage 2 are disrupted. Other pupils comment that this affects their learning. There are often small numbers of pupils who refuse to stay in class, and they are supervised in the corridors by teaching assistants who keep them safe. The lack of a substantive inclusion manager compounds this problem. Attendance too has declined. From being average at the time of the last inspection, attendance has been low for the last two years.

The interim headteacher and the deputy have worked successfully over the last eight months to establish secure systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. They have ensured that staff with leadership responsibilities have the opportunity to be involved in this. This work has not yet had an impact on provision and outcomes. The governing body has been replaced since last November, and the school is receiving intensive support from the local authority, which is very concerned about its performance. The school's single central record is a model of exemplary practice and pupils are kept safe at 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

Jane Chesterfield  
**Additional Inspector**



## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment by ensuring that all pupils make consistently good progress through the school.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good by using assessment information to match work to the learning needs of all pupils, particularly more able pupils.
- Make consistently clear to pupils what the next steps are in their learning in order to move up to the next level in their work.