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30 June 2011

Mr M Lightwood
Headteacher
Millbrook Primary School
Grainger Drive
Leegomery
Telford
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Dear Mr Lightwood

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Millbrook 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 pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, staff, pupils and parents.

Since the last inspection, a newly appointed headteacher joined the staff in April 2010. The senior leadership team and phase teams have been restructured. Two staff are due to retire at the end of August 2011. Three new staff, including a new deputy headteacher, two new teaching staff have been appointed and will take up their posts in September 2011. The local authority has strengthened the governing body through the addition of an extra governor.

As a result of the inspection on 6 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 in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment at the end of both key stages remains low. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010 there were improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff are more confident in assessing pupils' attainment because of the extensive support they have received in ensuring their assessments are accurate. The school is confident that at the end of Key Stage 2 this year there will be a significant improvement in the number of pupils gaining Level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science. The school now has rigorous systems in place to track pupils' progress and hold

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class teachers to account. These systems enable the school to quickly identify any pupils who are not meeting their targets. All teaching assistants have had training to develop their practice in the classroom. As a result, teaching assistants see teachers' planning before lessons, and carefully plan their work to support the pupils' learning. They effectively work with small groups of pupils to address misconceptions and strengthen pupils' learning. When the teacher is explaining the lesson to the whole class, teaching assistants sit alongside pupils who may have special educational needs and /or difficulties and support them effectively. This helps pupils keep up and encourages them to be involved in the lesson. The majority of pupils made at least satisfactory progress in the lessons observed. However teachers do not always take sufficient account of pupils' different starting points, which would promote better adapting of work to meet all needs and improve pupils' learning. The school has already identified this need and has plans in hand to address this. Attendance remains a priority for the school. The school has worked very effectively to put in place robust systems to improve attendance, which is broadly average. However, it has identified a number of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern and it is working sensitively with these families to address this. Behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are caring towards each other. Pupils' stated that bullying rarely occurs and they can talk to any member of staff if they have worries.

Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory across the school. Pupils work hard in lessons. There is an increasing amount of good teaching and learning at the upper end of the school. Teachers' planning has improved and is more consistent. Key questions are identified together with what pupils will learn. However, where teaching is weaker, teachers do not always plan tasks that accurately match the learning objectives. In the best lessons, pupils are asked to identify success criteria for the work. Where teaching is effective and learning moves at a good pace, teachers clearly identify the steps pupils need to take to learn effectively and plan for these. Teachers' questions in these lessons skilfully unpick pupils' understanding and misconceptions are addressed. Examples of pupils' work are used to model answers and help them understand what they need to do to improve their attainment. All work is regularly marked but, at times, opportunities are missed to explain the next steps in pupils' learning and provide opportunities for them to practise these. Pupils are increasingly expected to work independently and in small groups. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of other groups of pupils. This is because of the carefully planned support they receive in lessons and it ensures there is no negative impact on the learning of others.

In the year the headteacher has been in post, he has worked determinedly to improve teaching and learning and has made a significant impact on changing the ethos of the school. Leaders and managers at all levels are effectively holding staff to account through the school's tracking and monitoring systems. The restructured senior leadership team and the new phase teams have unearthed a wealth of talent

in the staff and created a 'can do' attitude. Staff have enthusiastically embraced these opportunities. For example, the curriculum team have focused on improving science and how links can be made with other subjects which enhance pupils' learning and improve progression. The school has identified where there is good practice and has begun to share this through a carefully planned schedule of meetings. Performance management systems have been tightened up and staff are expected and encouraged to attend training to develop their practice. Members of the governing body are more confident in questioning the school and holding it to account. For example, systems are now in place to monitor all aspects of the school's work and governors are involved in reviewing the school. The school has increased its capacity for improvement through the greater opportunities staff have to take responsibility and the increased rigour of the governing body. The school has benefited from the high quality of support from the local authority and other consultants and manages these well. This support has had an impact on improving the quality of teachers' planning, their practice in the classroom and ensuring assessment procedures are robust.

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

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise the levels of attainment throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics and science, by ensuring that coordinators are more effective in leading and managing their subjects and holding staff fully to account.
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - sharing good practice across the school
 - making more consistent use of assessment to plan lessons that meet pupils' individual needs
 - ensuring pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding through sustained periods of independent work.
- Involve more staff and governors in checking and evaluating the work of the school.