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Ms D Charman
Oakridge Junior School
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RG21 5RR

Dear Ms Charman

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Oakridge Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 July 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 staff, governors and the pupils.

A number of changes have occurred since the previous inspection. The acting deputy headteacher was appointed permanently to the post of deputy headteacher from January 2010. Seven new governors have been appointed including a new chair and vice chair due to the end of terms of office of previous governors. New teachers have been appointed, including a number of Newly Qualified Teachers. A new creative curriculum has been introduced across the school.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 November 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:

good progress in making improvements

and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2010 remained in line with the national average although attainment in mathematics was significantly below average for the first time in five years. Unvalidated data for 2011 indicate attainment in mathematics has returned to previous levels, as a result of focused developments at the school. English results indicate a decline, especially in writing. A large number of the English results are being contested by the school. Data show that pupils taking national tests in 2011 entered the school with lower starting points than in previous years and have made at least satisfactory progress.

Leaders at the school have taken decisive action to improve attainment and the rate of pupils' progress. Work observed in lessons and books shows pupils' typical work is at higher levels than reflected in results attained in the national tests. Teachers are skilled at planning and delivering work that matches accurately the different abilities within a class. Staff have successfully increased the level of expectation and challenge in pupils' work reflected in increasing numbers of pupils working well above expected levels for their age, particularly in Years 4 and 5. Good practice was observed in Year 6 English lessons where higher attaining pupils were challenged to use the five senses to produce powerful writing for suspense and others were given initial phrases to include or extend their own writing. However, some inconsistencies remain in the expectations and challenge for pupils with different abilities between classes in the same age group. Positive changes have occurred in teachers' understanding and use of assessment information to support learning. Consequently teachers make good use of pupils' prior learning to set ambitious targets for improvement, to ask pertinent questions and to provide a broad range of tasks matched to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The use of WALT (we are learning today) and WILF (what I'm looking for) helps pupils to understand clearly what they are aiming to achieve and motivate them to learn; aspirations have been raised as a result. Pupils make good and, at times, some make rapid progress because of the quality of marking and feedback. Comments consistently help pupils know their next steps in learning and how to improve further.

Through changes in the curriculum and enrichment activities, leaders have introduced a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of living in a multicultural society. As a result, pupils demonstrate good understanding of others' beliefs, cultures and living environments across the world. Links have been created with schools in Cornwall and Newark and more emphasis is given to inviting visitors who can help pupils understand living in a diverse British society. However, these initiatives have yet to be embedded and exploited fully.

Attendance has been steadily improving since the previous inspection and is now above the national average. Senior leaders have brought about this improvement through robust changes to procedures, policies and expectations for pupils and parents and carers. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the recognition and rewards they receive for good attendance and punctuality. Clear procedures are in place for contacting parents and carers and involving external agencies, where applicable, to improve the attendance of any pupils causing concern.

Senior leaders have effectively created an ethos of reflection and ambition across the school. The devolved leadership and subsequent opportunities to lead and monitor developments have resulted in a strong sense of teamwork and collaboration to drive improvements and raise pupils' achievement. High priority has been given to professional development and the sharing of good practice and expertise which have been led successfully by senior and middle managers. As a result of this collaboration and supportive ethos, the changes in staff have been managed effectively with no detrimental impact on pupils' learning. Newly Qualified Teachers are supported well, are embedded swiftly into the school and quickly share the same vision and drive as others. Senior leaders have introduced a programme of pupils' progress meetings which robustly hold staff to account for the progress pupils make in their class. These initiatives are having a positive impact, with earlier interventions for pupils identified as underachieving, in raising staff and pupils' aspirations and on improving the quality of teaching.

The support provided by the local authority and School Improvement Partner has been effective to monitor and evaluate developments. Improvements in English and mathematics have been driven by the headteacher and subject managers with some initial support provided by an external consultant for mathematics.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Increase the level of challenge, especially in numeracy and literacy, by ensuring that pupils are provided with work which accurately matches the different abilities within each class.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society by developing links with schools or other settings in the United Kingdom which display a greater ethnic diversity.
- Raise pupils' rates of attendance by implementing effective strategies as soon as possible to ensure that fewer pupils go on holiday for extended periods within term-time.