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Miss Carole Harris
Headteacher
Bordesley Green Primary School
Marchmont Road
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Dear Miss Harris

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bordesley Green Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when additional inspector Sally Hall and I inspected your school on 13 July 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to everyone who spoke to us, including members of staff, pupils and your School Improvement Partner.

During this academic year the Key Stage 2 numeracy coordinator has been on family leave. Her role has been covered by the Key Stage 1 numeracy coordinator.

As a result of the inspection on 17 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.

Senior leaders have significantly improved systems to monitor the attainment of pupils by year, subject, and pupil group. Teachers are held to account for the performance and progress of their pupils. Leaders know accurately how every pupil has progressed each term and this information is used to plan intervention where necessary. Pupils join the school at a level well below that expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average in English and mathematics although indicative results for 2011 suggest standards in mathematics are below average at the end of Key Stage 2. All pupil groups including the current Year 6 and pupils those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have made good progress this year, but Year 6 pupils have been unable to fully catch up on the ground they lost in mathematics during their first two years in Key Stage 2.

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However, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the highest possible level in mathematics has increased significantly. Evidence from other year groups in Key Stage 2 indicates they are on track to achieve broadly average standards. Improvements in pupil achievement and in the quality of teaching demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 have numerous opportunities to solve problems in mathematics and to explain their reasons orally and in writing. Leaders accurately identified where there are gaps in teachers' knowledge of mathematics in order to provide support for them in the classroom. Teachers have been equipped with additional resources for investigative activities and the school's new calculation policy has been widely distributed to ensure consistency of pupils' approach to mathematics at school and at home.

In mathematics lessons, pupils are actively engaged in their learning with minimal time spent by the teachers to introduce tasks. Pupils enjoy this practical approach where they can talk in pairs or groups about their ideas with each other. They also appreciate real-life problems that will help prepare them for future life, for example handling money. Pupils also welcome activities drawn from their own experience, for example using Muslim prayer times to illustrate work on timetables. Higher attaining pupils are particularly confident in giving extended oral and written responses.

There has been significant progress in mathematics in planning for their needs of different groups of pupils where, although pupils are already taught in ability classes, teachers plan different outcomes for each groups within the class. Consequently, in the best lessons seen higher attaining pupils were given extended challenging activities and lower attaining pupils had guided activities to help them construct their written responses. Teaching assistants work well with pupils, especially when they encourage pupils to think for themselves or work with other pupils and when they take advantage of pupils' home language to explain concepts and ideas. The passport to learning scheme is popular with pupils and enables them to know what they have achieved and their next steps in learning.

Termly progress meetings between senior leaders and class teachers ensure that data is analysed rigorously to identify any trends or concerns in different pupil groups to follow up. Where additional needs have arisen, for example arrivals from Somalia and Romania who are new to speaking English, the school has appointed additional bilingual staff to support them and families. In some lessons planning for different groups of pupils is not as effective. At times, lower attaining groups have the same task as the rest of the class and become too dependent on support from adults. Where written tasks are too open ended, lower attaining pupils struggle to complete their work without support.

Literacy is a strong focus in mathematics lessons where pupils have extended opportunities to share ideas and explain their working out. The themed curriculum is having a positive impact in giving pupils the opportunity to develop and apply their

literacy skills to a range of other contexts. They respond well to themes which have been chosen to suit their interests. Key vocabulary items are explained by teachers although pupils do not always understand that some words, for example 'translate' can have a different meaning in different subject contexts. Monitoring of literacy by subject leaders is well advanced in literacy lessons but at an early stage of development across the curriculum.

The School Improvement Partner has supported the school well to build a good capacity to improve further through monitoring and challenging the school particularly in the key issues for development from the last inspection and the better use of data to assess pupils.

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

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- By September 2010:
 - improve progress and learning in mathematical skills in Key Stage 2 by providing more planned opportunities for pupils to solve problems and to explain their reasoning orally and in writing
 - ensure lessons are consistently planned to provide a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities
 - make sure writing tasks across the curriculum are planned as carefully as they are in literacy lessons.