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Thursday 14 July 2011

Mr D Kenny
Headteacher
Hollybush Primary
Broad Lane
Bramley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS13 2JJ

Dear Mr Kenny,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hollybush Primary

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 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 the group of pupils who took time to speak with me.

Since the 2010 inspection, two teachers have left the school and another is due to leave at the end of this term. New staff have been appointed to replace those who have left.

As a result of the inspection on Thursday 21 January 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in pupils' attainment and progress at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. Most pupils are making good progress to close the gaps between their attainment and the expectations for their age and this is demonstrated in the school's data and in pupils' progress in lessons. The latest unvalidated results, the highest in the school's history, show much improved attainment in Year 6: 84% of pupils have achieved Level 4 in English, and met their targets, while 61% achieved this level in mathematics, just short of their target. The introduction of a wider range of interventions particularly in reading and the 'Big Write' project underpin the good progress in achieving Level 4 English in Year 6 and in other year groups. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 has steadily increased in the last two years. The school has plans to further support more-able pupils' progress in extending their abilities in mathematics and language but these have yet to be implemented.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and less-able pupils, made better progress over the last year compared to their starting points in reading and writing. Intervention strategies to help them to catch up in basic skills have contributed well to their progress. A growing number of pupils, mostly in Years 5 and 6, no longer need specialist additional support because they are confident and capable when working in lessons.

The overall quality of teaching is improving although there is some variability which the school is aware of. New teachers have settled well and good relationships between staff and pupils are firmly established. Assessment and tracking information is used effectively to identify pupils in need of support and teachers' planning is well-pitched to meet pupils' learning needs in lessons. Consequently, pupils' progress in the lessons observed was mostly good with some that is satisfactory. The introduction of setting pupils by ability for mathematics and phonics lessons and the strong emphasis on matching work to pupils' specific needs have contributed effectively to challenging and improving pupils' progress. Well-structured lessons, with tasks that progressively deepened pupils' understanding were a good feature of the best literacy and numeracy lessons. In mathematics lessons, the focus on reading to identify the key parts of the questions and good resources to guide pupils in breaking problems down into small steps were most effective in aiding their progress. Pupils are enthusiastic in their response to the greater challenge in learning and they are eager for success. The school has harnessed this well. The achievement of a 'pen license' to signify good handwriting and the mastery of 'tricky words', and the successful reading of more advanced 'tricky books' are highly-prized skills which all pupils aspire to. Pupils' keenness to learn is demonstrated in their improving attendance and punctuality, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, which has improved strongly. The school is making progress in tackling persistent absence, even though increasing numbers of pupils have arrived at the school in the last year with established patterns of poor attendance. However, attendance overall remains below average and the high mobility rates continue to be a barrier to raising the achievement of all pupils.

Senior leaders have greater clarity and focus in their roles and this is demonstrated in their detailed monitoring and regular meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress. Local authority support has challenged and guided the school's use of data. It has supported the school effectively with partnership work with other schools to develop ideas to promote attendance. The headteacher has a detailed and accurate overview of the school. He recognises where further developments are needed to improve pupils' outcomes.

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

Ms Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on Thursday 21 January 2010

- Raise pupils' attainment and their achievement in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and that of pupils' learning is consistently good, by:
 - improving the degree of challenge for pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities and lower-ability pupils to better cater for the very wide levels of need, providing small logical steps based upon practical and interesting activities
 - refining the 'steps to success' so that they are tailored more sharply to pupils' levels of ability
 - providing a higher level of challenge for more-able pupils.