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14 September 2011

Mr S Madden  
Headteacher  
St Matthew's CE Primary School  
Poplar Road  
Stretford  
Manchester  
M32 9AN

Dear Mr Madden

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Matthew's CE Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 September 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 governors, local authority officers, staff and pupils with whom I met.

Since the inspection in July 2010, four new substantive teachers have joined the school, including the new deputy headteacher. One teacher has been employed and trained to undertake Reading Recovery and a part-time teacher has been employed to develop outdoor education. Extensive remodelling of the building has taken place and an outdoor classroom constructed.

As a result of the inspection on 19 July 2010, the school was asked to tackle 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.

The results of the 2011 national assessments for seven- and eleven-year-olds were higher than in previous years and considerably higher than in 2010. The largest gains in Key Stage 1 were in reading and mathematics where the proportions of pupils reaching the expected levels were broadly average. Fewer than average pupils reached the expected level in writing, but the figure was higher than in previous years. In Key Stage 2, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard was higher than the national and local authority averages for the first time and the number of pupils gaining the higher levels was much improved.

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Lesson observations confirm that the school's greater focus on improving pupils' writing and mathematical skills is paying dividends. More-able pupils are being challenged in lessons. Teachers are following the agreed marking policy more consistently, giving pupils clearer guidance about improving their work. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the sharper focus on developing good early reading and writing skills means that these pupils are learning to read and write independently and making faster progress than previous year groups. Some weaknesses remain: the exercise books of some pupils towards the top of the school reveal the legacy of underachievement in poor spelling, handwriting and grammar.

For the first time in several years, the school starts the new academic year with a settled staff. During this visit, satisfactory and good teaching was observed; the teaching of mathematics being stronger than that of English.

Much work has been done to strengthen leadership and management. The detailed and regular programme of lesson observation, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' books and discussions with pupils are ensuring a greater consistency in the quality of teaching. There is a greater focus on what pupils are learning and the progress they are making. The new deputy headteacher has been instrumental in ensuring that data on pupils' progress is analysed more methodically and informs discussions with teachers.

Governors play a fuller part in the life of the school, attending more events and having a greater presence. New 'Lead Governor' roles have been created to liaise with staff leading on key aspects of the school's development, including curricular areas, enabling governors to be better informed and involved in decision making,

The local authority provides effective oversight of, and support for, 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

Angela Westington  
Her Majesty's Inspector



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2010**

- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - improving pupils' skills in expressing their ideas by writing in an ordered sequence and providing more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum
  - extending pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics.
  
- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring teachers are more consistent in setting work that matches the needs of pupils, particularly for those who are more able
  - making sure teachers use marking and discussion effectively to show pupils how they might improve.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - sharpening the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
  - ensuring all governors are fully engaged in promoting the school's improvement.

