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Mrs J Kennard
Headteacher
Purley Oaks Primary School
Bynes Road
South Croydon
Surrey
CR2 0PR

Dear Mrs Kennard

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Purley Oaks Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 September 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders, phase leaders and subject leaders who spoke with me.

The school has been through a number of significant changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up post at the beginning of the month. She had increasingly supported the school during the previous two terms through a period of instability in its leadership. The deputy headteacher joined in January 2011 and four teachers are new this term. The governing body has three parent vacancies and a new staff governor. A children's centre, breakfast club and after-school club, managed by the school, have recently opened. The school is in the process of establishing an additional Year 1 class to accommodate a rise in the number of pupils requiring a school place locally.

As a result of the inspection on 26 and 27 May 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Pupils, staff and the governing body recognise that progress in securing improvements since the previous inspection has accelerated recently with greater stability under the strong leadership of the new headteacher. Expectations are being raised through a shared commitment to a new school vision of 'pride in excellence'. A lot has been accomplished in a short space of time but, because much is still new and not embedded, improvements in pupils' achievement are variable across year groups and subjects. More children develop the skills and knowledge expected for their age by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved and is now broadly average. However, the quality of learning and rate of progress that pupils make throughout the school are inconsistent. Improved attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was not maintained this year in English because fewer pupils attained the higher levels.

The school's own tracking information, work seen in pupils' books and observations in lessons indicate that learning and progress are being accelerated, although this is less strong in mathematics and variable in different classes. Effective systems have been put in place to track the progress that pupils make and ensure that they are provided with the support they need to help them catch up. This helps to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve and hold staff to account more effectively for the impact of their work on the outcomes for all pupils, including the more able.

Appropriate actions are being taken to address inadequate teaching so more lessons are now satisfactory. Teachers have an increasing awareness of what makes a good lesson but this is not sufficiently embedded in their practice to secure consistently good teaching and learning. While there are examples of good lessons, the school's monitoring records show that the proportion of these has not increased.

Classrooms consistently provide pupils with a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Displays are interesting, eye-catching and offer pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work and reach their learning goals. Teachers' planning routinely includes shared learning objectives and success criteria, activities for groups of pupils of different abilities and challenges for pupils to extend their learning, particularly for the more able. However, in some lessons seen, when teachers were working with a particular group, they did not engage sufficiently with other pupils to check their progress, maintain a good pace and move their learning on more quickly. The expectations of pupils to complete the extension and challenge activities were also unclear so pupils who could have moved onto these did not always do so.

The curriculum is being developed to ensure it is meaningful and delivered in a more interesting way. Pupils are positive about the changes. They say that lessons are more fun, they can make choices and are given more challenging work. However, they say that this is more common in English than mathematics. Although they have literacy targets and marking helps them to understand how they can improve, this is not consistently so in mathematics.



Appropriate systems and structures have been put in place to improve the impact of leaders at all levels so that they can contribute more effectively to school improvement. Roles and responsibilities have been reorganised, underpinned by detailed job descriptions. This means that phase and subject leaders have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. A planned approach to leadership development, through coaching and mentoring, is being implemented to develop their skills in data analysis, observation, monitoring, evaluation and planning. They are given time to carry out their duties and supported in this by senior leaders and the local authority. However, because this is at the early stages of development, there has been limited time for them to have an impact on improvement. Consequently, at this stage, the school is demonstrating a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Accelerate learning and achievement for all pupils, and in particular for the more-able pupils, so that by the time they leave in Year 6 more attain the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science than they do currently.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more lessons are good by:
 - checking that work and activities are matched accurately to the needs and abilities of the individual pupils, especially for the more-able pupils
 - moving lessons along at a brisker pace with more opportunities for creative, lively and first-hand learning experiences
 - ensuring pupils know and use their longer-term targets so they can take more responsibility for their learning across the range of subjects.
- Develop the role of the subject leaders in contributing effectively to school improvement by:
 - increasing the opportunities for them to observe teaching and learning across the school
 - boosting their confidence in accessing and using assessment data effectively.