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Mr J Burt
The Interim Executive Headteacher
Rotherhithe Primary School
Rotherhithe New Road
London
SE16 2PL

Dear Mr Burt

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Rotherhithe Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 September 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to those pupils who spoke to me and to the chair of governors with whom I met.

Since the school was inspected the headteacher and one of the two deputy headteachers have left. An interim executive headteacher from another Southwark school judged to be outstanding is currently leading the school. The school will federate with Redriff Primary School from January 2012, with an executive headteacher assuming the leadership of both schools. The current deputy headteacher at Rotherhithe Primary School will become head of school. This arrangement will provide additional stability following changes in the leadership of the school.

As a result of the inspection on 16 and 17 February 2011, 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 is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The most recent tests and assessments of pupils' work indicate that attainment is rising. Whilst attainment by the end of Year 6 remains low it showed strong improvement in English, mathematics and science. The biggest gains were in mathematics. However, some more able pupils could have done better and the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 fell. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 indicate strong gains in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils

reaching the higher Level 3 also showed improvement. Disappointing outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage are being effectively addressed through changes in staffing, enhanced provision and additional support.

A scrutiny of pupils' books, together with observations of teaching, indicates that progress is accelerating and that this is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. Teachers now match work very well to pupils' individual needs. Teaching assistants support their focus groups well, while teachers move unobtrusively around the classroom, addressing misconceptions and providing additional challenge. Ongoing assessment for learning is used to move pupils on quickly to more challenging work and to provide extra support for pupils who are struggling. Marking is detailed and thorough and provides good feedback, challenge and encouragement. Marking is equally good in English and mathematics. While marking is good at telling pupils what they need to do to improve, these next step targets are not consistently referred back to in subsequent marking. Pupils' longer term, National Curriculum levelled targets in the front of their books are relatively new, but pupils were able to talk about them with confidence and knew what they had to do to meet them. Peer and personal assessment of both targets and pieces of work is becoming a well-established element of classroom practice. Pupils say they value the daily reinforcement of basic numeracy skills. Teaching is now much more focused on practical learning across the curriculum, with literacy and numeracy skills frequently planned for and applied in other subjects.

Because teaching is engaging and learning is well matched to pupils' needs and interests, pupils work with good concentration and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners. Relationships are strong, pupils work well in small groups and with partners and readily support, assess and challenge their own and their peers' work. Teachers ask a range of questions to enable all pupils to engage in the lesson. Teachers set themselves exacting standards and are eager to improve both their own practice and outcomes for learners. The school's strengths in respect of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils have been maintained and the satisfactory behaviour observed at the time of the last inspection has been strengthened.

The senior leadership team has provided effective support for school improvement. The school improvement plan contains appropriate priorities drawn from the last inspection report and the school's own accurate self-evaluation. It links closely to the subject action plans and target setting process so that all elements of school improvement dovetail well. Sources of evidence in action plans are clear and time limited. Targets for pupils' attainment and progress are the glue which binds the processes of school improvement and staff development together, so that lines of accountability are clear. The monitoring of teaching and learning is frequent, rigorous and accurate and results in teachers knowing both their strengths and those areas which can be improved.

Safeguarding arrangements comply fully with statutory requirements. The single central register is clear, and staff training is up to date. The local authority has

provided a range of effective support for the leadership and management of the school and for improving teaching and learning across the curriculum. The school has valued the support it has received.

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

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2011

- Ensure teaching is consistently good so that Year 6 pupils' attainment is at least in line with the national average by:
 - providing challenging activities in every lesson for pupils of differing abilities
 - offering more practical and engaging tasks, especially in mathematics
 - enabling pupils to take more responsibility for improving their learning by making sure they know what they are aiming to achieve.
- Exploit all opportunities in the curriculum to help pupils enjoy their English and mathematics.
- Improve further the impact of leaders at all levels by:
 - ensuring all levels of development planning have clear and measurable targets so that everyone understands the impact they are expected to make on pupils' attainment and how they will be held accountable
 - improving the impact of lesson monitoring in the main school and the monitoring of provision in the childcare and Early Years Foundation Stage so as to bring about rapid improvement.