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Thursday 6 October 2011

Mrs K Holden  
Headteacher  
Delves Lane Junior School  
Delves Lane  
Consett  
County Durham  
DH8 7ES

Dear Mrs Holden,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Delves Lane Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 5 October 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to your staff and pupils, and the Chair of the Governing Body for being prepared to talk with me during this visit.

Since the previous inspection, one deputy headteacher has left the school and has not been replaced, and one new teacher started at the school in September of this year. The school has also experienced around a 5% increase in school numbers.

As a result of the inspection in April 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 trend in pupils' attainment when they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 has typically been low. However, the 2011 national test results, which are as yet unvalidated, show a significant turning point in both English and mathematics, with pupils' attainment now in line with the national average. In lessons seen during this inspection, all pupils were making at least satisfactory or better progress in their learning, with the overwhelming majority consolidating and developing further their knowledge and understanding of essential key skills in literacy and numeracy. The pupils respond well in lessons, and enjoy engaging in 'question and answer' activities in whole-class or small groups. As a result, the pupils are developing their confidence to use language correctly, and apply their number knowledge accurately in different situations.

Following the previous inspection, the school responded positively to its low attainment trend with focused work in literacy and numeracy across all age groups. Helped by detailed

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school development planning, all class teachers have embraced a focused approach to their teaching by planning activities that reinforce the learning of important key skills, together with the more regular collection of pupils' performance data in English and mathematics. The use of these data is also helping the school and, in particular, individual class teachers, to target individual pupils who are underperforming relative to their stated targets. Lesson-planning is thorough and sufficiently focused on covering a range of activities that will help all pupils make gains in their learning. Teachers are adept at responding positively to pupils in question and answer plenary sessions, and the quality of marking work in literacy is both clear and helpful to the pupils. Senior leaders and managers are also aware that these developments in marking pupils' work and in the regular assessment and recording of pupil progress in English and mathematics now need to be extended across the full curriculum, to raise attainment in all subjects.

Although the school has focused its energies on raising levels of attainment, it has also successfully continued to provide a range of different activities which are helping the pupils to develop a better understanding of life in other countries, and of the multi-ethnic and varied cultural make-up of modern British society. The school positively encourages pupils to experience different aspects of life outside of its immediate environment; from participation in school-based work with external visitors such as a Chinese artist, Zulu art and dance work, to a range of different sports, which include some 'intergenerational carpet bowls'. These activities are helping the pupils to appreciate some aspects of different cultures outside of their own school and home areas. However, the school has yet to carry out a detailed audit of its current provision, which would identify areas of further cultural development in relation to the broader range of different ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups at regional, national, and global levels.

Senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, take their evaluation and monitoring role very seriously, and are beginning to collect and use information about the quality of provision to good effect. The links with external partners, particularly the local authority, have been productive and beneficial to 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

Mr Brian Blake  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place Tuesday 27 April 2010**

- Raise attainment by:
  - further developing the range of those learning activities that offer pupils opportunities for practical and investigative activities, so that they are involved and challenged more in lessons
  - ensuring that data are used well to develop teaching and learning, so that work is well-matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- Develop pupils understanding of life in other countries and the multicultural make-up of modern British society.