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Mr Ian Randall  
Headteacher  
Bucknall Primary School  
Main Road  
Bucknall  
Woodhall Spa  
LN10 5DT

Dear Mr Randall

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bucknall Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 October 2011. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils and members of the governing body who I met with during the inspection.

The headteacher was seconded to the school as acting headteacher in September 2010, and took up the permanent post in September 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 18 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

National unvalidated assessment data show that in 2011 the attainment of pupils completing Year 6 was much higher than in previous years and was significantly above average in English, and slightly above average in mathematics. This is the result of a rapid acceleration in pupils' progress since the previous inspection. The school's own assessment information shows that in all year groups the large majority of pupils are now making good progress. This is also the case for different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The reason for this improvement in achievement is that teaching and learning in lessons are now of a much higher quality. The headteacher demonstrates a clear ambition and drive, and has been very successful in strengthening provision. A well-focused development plan, supported by effective procedures to check the work of the school, has resulted in the necessary improvements in outcomes. For example, at the time of the last inspection attainment in writing was low, but now it is above

September 2010



average as a result of robust evaluation and implementation of the developments needed in provision to accelerate pupils' progress. This effective leadership has galvanised the staff to improve their practice and morale is high. Consequently, the school demonstrates much stronger capacity for sustained improvement than at the time of the last inspection. The members of the governing body are very knowledgeable about the work of the school and well equipped to hold the headteacher to account for its strategic development. The local authority has provided the headteacher with useful guidance and advice that has aided him in his leadership.

The teaching and curriculum for writing are characterised by exciting, stimulating lessons that are carefully crafted to ensure pupils fully engage in their work. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils were preparing to write a newspaper article. They thoroughly enjoyed acting as reporters and devising questions that they could ask to try and identify who had stolen the golden conker. One exciting development is the successful use of up-to-date technology in encouraging pupils to write. For example, Year 6 pupils were using handheld computers to write their own e-books. The curriculum offers an adequate range of opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in different subjects. The standard of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are not yet as good as they could be.

Assessment information is now used well to ensure that pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Weekly target times, when pupils discuss with teachers the next steps they need to take to improve their work, are a particularly effective initiative. Pupils reported that they understand their targets and the steps they have to take to achieve them. Generally marking gives helpful advice on how to improve work, and pupils readily respond to it. Assessment information is used particularly well in English to pitch work at the correct level for different groups of pupils and also to ensure that they understand what is expected of them in lessons. In mathematics a few pupils, particularly the most able, do not make as much progress as they could because the work is insufficiently challenging.

The school has worked hard to broaden the curriculum so that pupils have a greater understanding of other cultures and societies within Great Britain and globally. For example, each term a different country is the focus for assemblies and work in lessons. In addition, regular enrichment activities such as the African, Indian and Polish days held recently are broadening pupils' cultural understanding and awareness. Pupils demonstrate a growing insight into the lives of others. For example, one pupil reported that he realised how wealthy we were in this country, having seen the conditions that some people in Africa live in.

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

Tim Bristow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## Annex

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

- Raise standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
  - giving pupils regular opportunities to write at length
  - adopting a systematic approach to reinforcing writing skills across the curriculum.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to formulate and communicate explicit expectations and objectives for all pupils
  - improving the advice that pupils receive in conversations with staff and through the targets that teachers set through their marking of work.
  
- Strengthen the curriculum by:
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to learn about cultural and ethnic diversity in modern Britain
  - introducing a global dimension into pupils' learning.