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13 October 2011

Mrs S Hall  
Executive headteacher  
North Thoresby Primary School  
High Street  
North Thoresby  
Grimsby  
DN36 5PL

Dear Mrs Hall

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 October 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 pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, parents and staff with whom I met during the day.

I note that there have been some significant staff changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher and full-time teacher who were both on long-term sick leave at the time of the last inspection have now left the school. A substantive executive headteacher and substantive assistant headteacher have been appointed, and both also work at a nearby school that is in a formal collaboration with North Thoresby Primary School. A single governing body now oversees the work of both schools. A new teacher has been appointed to teach the Key Stage 1 class.

As a result of the inspection on 8–9 July 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The latest end of Key Stage 2 results show that attainment is low and the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading and writing between Year 2 and Year 6 is lower than average compared with schools nationally. However, this masks a rapidly changing picture in the school. Pupils in this cohort made good progress during Year 6, but not enough to make up for previous underachievement. The latest school tracking data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicates that different

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groups of pupils across the school are now making good, and in some cases better than good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because the quality of teaching is improving quickly, underpinned by good leadership and management.

Daily sessions linking sounds to letters are included in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Children were observed enjoying these sessions and making good progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given increased opportunities to write, including those at earlier 'mark-making' stages. However, the outdoor learning area is not as well resourced as the indoor learning environment and does not support as effectively opportunities for children's engagement in writing.

The school's detailed monitoring records indicate that most teaching is good. During the inspection, consistently good teaching was observed. Pupils make good progress in lessons because tasks are pitched precisely to pupils' abilities and lessons run at a good pace. Teachers' skilful use of questioning ensures that all pupils, including the more able, are well engaged in learning and appropriately challenged in their thinking. Pupils are given time at the beginning of lessons to read teachers' comments about their most recent pieces of work. The feedback is constructive and of high quality and supports pupils' good and improving progress well. Although the school has experimented with individual writing targets for pupils and explored a number of options, a consistent, subject-specific target setting system is still not embedded across the school. This remains to be a priority for the school ahead of the next section 5 inspection.

Since the last inspection, a new curriculum has been implemented. Clear links have been planned to promote further development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects. However, the delivery of the new curriculum is at an early stage. Although some investigative work has been undertaken by pupils, opportunities continue to be missed to develop pupils' thinking skills through a broader range of investigative work.

The school has made good progress in demonstrating a better capacity to improve. The leadership and staffing of the school are now secure and well established. The executive headteacher has reorganised leadership roles to enable staff to lead initiatives and deploy expertise across both school sites. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation timetable ensures that the impact of actions is carefully considered and reviewed. The school development plan includes clear milestones to enable those monitoring actions to gauge the school's progress over time. Members of the governing body have extended their skills in reviewing information on pupils' performance and have attended appropriate training. This has supported them well in raising a comprehensive list of questions and challenges to school leaders. However, the governing body's work in formally aligning with school staff to monitor and evaluate the impact of specific initiatives is at an early stage. This remains to be an area for improvement ahead of the next section 5 inspection. Professional

partners, working in collaboration with the local authority, have supported the school well during a period of significant change.

The central record of suitability checks on staff was scrutinised and it fully meets current government requirements.

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

Jeremy Spencer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009**

- Ensure that daily sessions linking sounds to letters are included in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision on a systematic programme, and that plenty of pre-writing activities are included when children are ready to write.
- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially but not only in mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching so that at least 80% of lesson observations are good or better by July 2011, by:
  - setting subject specific targets that are shared with pupils and regularly reviewed
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills in numeracy lessons and across subjects, including more investigative work to develop pupils' thinking skills
  - pitching tasks precisely to ability and that provide sufficient challenge, especially for the more able
  - ensuring written feedback in pupils' books explains how pupils can improve.
- Strengthen the school's capacity to sustain improvement by:
  - securing the leadership and staffing of the school
  - extending governors' skills in reviewing information on pupils' performance and monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
  - enabling all staff to take an active role in monitoring , evaluating and leading improvements.