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20 October 2011

Mrs Alison Wyld  
Interim headteacher  
Park Primary School  
Gloucester Road  
Aldershot  
Hampshire  
GU11 3SL

Dear Mrs Wyld

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 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 staff, pupils, the chair of the governing body and the local authority link advisor who met with me during my visit.

The substantive headteacher left the school in July 2011 and a new headteacher has been appointed to lead the school from January 2012. In the interim, a headteacher has been seconded from a nearby junior school. Since the last inspection, a new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed along with a number of new governors. A third of teachers are also newly arrived since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 16 and 17 June 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the last inspection and girls' attainment in national tests for Year 6 pupils, especially in mathematics, was close to the national average in 2011. Boys' attainment, however, has improved more slowly. In English, boys' attainment remains very low, so that only a minority reached the nationally expected Level 4 in Year 6 national tests in 2011. Boys' scores



have also been low in reading and writing assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. Boys' literacy skills are low on entry to the school, and they make progress broadly in line with nationally expected rates, but that progress is not fast enough to significantly close the large gap between their performance and that of their peers nationally. School performance targets are too low to drive higher expectations for pupils' progress across each year in the school.

Teachers have designed an engaging curriculum, and make effective use of a wide range of resources, including trips and fieldwork, to stimulate pupils' ideas and interests. Warm relationships between teachers and pupils prevail throughout the school. Pupils' evident enjoyment of school is reflected in their improved attendance and sharp reductions in persistent absenteeism. However, pupils' pace of learning, and teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve in a lesson, are too often not high enough. While most teaching is at least satisfactory, there is not enough good teaching to sufficiently improve pupils' rates of progress. The school offers some successful interventions to support pupils' specific needs, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but progress is not consistently good in lessons in the classroom. Work is not always adapted sufficiently to take account of pupils' prior learning and move them on to more challenging tasks, so that pupils say that sometimes work is too easy. Teachers mostly set clear objectives for pupils' learning in lessons, although occasionally there are too many of these so that pupils lose focus. While teachers are generally very effective in checking that pupils understand key ideas and processes, they are less effective in identifying when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging work.

The school has recently adopted a new system to establish consistency in the setting of individual pupil targets in writing. The benefits of this system are yet to be fully understood and utilised by all staff and pupils. Nonetheless, there are examples of good practice where pupils are clearly aware of their targets and improve their work as a result. In a few instances, pupils are encouraged to assess their own work against their targets. There are some further examples of pupils self-assessing against success criteria for individual tasks, which further supports the development of their independence and understanding. Target setting in other subjects, including mathematics, is being used with good effect in some classes. Teachers' marking in English is often specific and helpful in showing pupils how to improve, but not all pupils understand or act on the advice given. The quality of marking in subjects other than English is less consistently specific in the guidance given.

The school is benefitting from external scrutiny and support. The school improvement partner had identified significant weaknesses at the start of the year which demonstrated the urgency of the need for action. The local authority has been effective in strengthening aspects of the school's capacity to improve, for example through involvement in measures to significantly strengthen governance. As a result, the governing body now holds the school much more sharply to account for its performance. The local authority also facilitated arrangements to appoint the interim headteacher to avoid a rushed recruitment of a new substantive headteacher. The



interim headteacher has quickly identified key priorities for the school, and established important initiatives to improve links with parents, carers and the community. The engagement of parents and carers in their children's learning, and links with key partners in the community, had been underdeveloped. Teachers are linking with other local schools in an 'Excellence Cluster' to see and share good practice. Many new developments are underway in the school, including a renewed emphasis on reading, which are beginning to yield positive effects. However, these are yet to be fully embedded and to have full effect in accelerating pupils' learning and achievement. The school is, therefore, yet to show adequate improvement in demonstrating a better capacity to improve.

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

Ian Hodgkinson

**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## Annex

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

- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching to raise attainment and accelerate progress in English and mathematics by:
  - using assessment information to plan work which more accurately matches pupils' abilities to challenge and extend their learning
  - making clear to pupils what they are learning during lessons and checking their understanding.
  
- Improve the quality of marking and use of pupils' targets by:
  - making clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their own learning.