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30 October 2011

Acting Headteacher  
Maryport CofE Junior School  
Camp Road  
Maryport  
Cumbria  
CA15 6JN

Dear Ms M Maughan

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Maryport CofE Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you, your pupils and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I also welcomed the opportunity to talk with the Chair of the Governing Body and three representatives from the local authority.

The headteacher is currently absent from the school having taken extended sick leave in May 2011. She has been replaced by an acting headteacher seconded from a local school. The acting headteacher joined the school on 1 June 2011 and is due to stay in post until the end of the autumn term 2011. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable staff turbulence due to illness and maternity leave. The school roll has fallen by 18 pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has dropped markedly and is now average.

As a result of the inspection on 6 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment in the most recent tests and assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2011, which is currently unvalidated national data, was broadly average in English but below average in mathematics. This cohort of pupils made less than the expected progress from their above average starting points when they entered the school. Different groups of pupils make variable rates of progress. While most higher-attaining pupils made the progress expected of them, middle and lower-attaining pupils did not and failed to make the expected progress in both English and mathematics. The school's and the local authority's tracking data show that many current pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable and are unlikely to meet their targets this year, especially in mathematics.

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

In lessons seen during the monitoring inspection, teaching was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers make work relevant and use interesting tasks and resources to engage pupils' interest. For example, pupils were seen really enjoying learning as they designed leaflets and radio broadcasts about a forthcoming bonfire night party. However, most lessons lack the higher level of pace and challenge needed to accelerate pupils' progress sufficiently to compensate for their previous underachievement. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently and at their own pace. Pupils are polite and compliant. However, their behaviour for learning is less well developed. Many lack the independent learning skills needed to enable them to make faster progress. Extra support for pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now more timely and sharply focused although the full impact of the effectiveness of this support has not been evaluated. The fall in numbers who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is due to changes in the way the school assesses pupils' needs.

The rigour and accuracy of assessment of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection. In the books of pupils in Year 3, there are examples of good practice in marking and feedback to pupils which are helping them to improve their work. However, this good practice is not shared across the school. Pupils are now set appropriate targets in English but not in mathematics.

The recently appointed acting headteacher has brought vision, harmony and stability to the school. She has made all staff more aware of, and accountable for, the progress of pupils in their classes. Teaching and learning are monitored more regularly and constructive support, advice and further training are all beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' progress is now being checked more rigorously and systematically. Members of the governing body are better informed about the work of the school. Links with the adjacent infant school are developing well. However, these improvements are from a very low base, are very recent and it is too early to measure the impact on outcomes for pupils. The roles of other senior leaders are in the very early stages of development as the literacy, numeracy, curriculum and special educational needs coordinators are all new to their posts. All of this, combined with uncertainty about the future leadership of the school, contributes to the school's current inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The acting headteacher has welcomed the recent support she has received from the local authority in monitoring teaching and learning, identifying immediate priorities for improvement and formulating a raising achievement plan.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Ashdown  
Additional inspector

## **Annex**

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, by July 2011, by:
  - ensuring that teaching is consistently good or better across the school to enable all pupils to make at least good progress
  - ensuring that teachers set appropriately challenging tasks and activities for all groups of pupils.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving improvement and swiftly intervening to support pupils who may not be making as much progress as they should by:
  - systematically and rigorously checking pupils' progress based on accurate assessments using consistently applied measures of success
  - ensuring that assessments are consistently accurate and used to set appropriate targets for individuals and groups of pupils.