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Mr Geoff Leyland
Headteacher
Sharley Park Community Primary School
Pilsley Road
Danesmoor
Chesterfield
S45 9BN

Dear Mr Leyland

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Sharley Park Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 November, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, as well as the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body with whom I spoke, for their time and courtesy. I would like particularly to thank the pupils for the most enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the school's last inspection there have been no significant contextual changes.

As a result of the inspection on 15 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The rate of progress made by pupils across the school, particularly at Key Stage 2 and in mathematics, is accelerating and, as a result, standards are rising. The unvalidated results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2011 indicate a significant increase in attainment in both English and mathematics. These results show that, for the first time in three years, overall attainment is in line with the national average. This improved progress is the result of better provision, effective use of targets and the impact of strong, strategic leadership.

Consistently good teaching is a key factor in the improvement in pupils' attainment. An effective combination of appropriate planning, clear learning intentions, interesting activities and lively questioning sustains pupils' interest. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate ideas and information. Work is

well matched to pupils' learning needs and pupils know the levels they are working at and what they need to do to meet their targets and reach the next level. There is a strong focus on individual needs so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Teaching assistants provide valuable assistance to a range of pupils through one-to-one support, the withdrawal of small groups, or through general support in the classroom.

The teaching of writing has a high priority and pupils are enthusiastic writers. Pupils talk with excitement about 'Big Writing' and explain how the detailed feedback they receive helps them to improve. Basic skills, including punctuation and sentence construction, are well taught in whole-class sessions and pupils have good opportunities to develop these skills at their own ability level in literacy group work. The teaching of phonics is systematic throughout the school. Younger pupils, in particular, demonstrate a growing confidence in using their phonic knowledge to make plausible attempts at spelling. The school's focus on basic skills also applies to mathematics. Pupils enjoy a daily input on basics such as counting, learning times-tables and rehearsing number bonds. Pupils report that they feel more confident in using and applying these skills to solve mathematical problems.

The school has made good progress in developing pupils' awareness of other cultures, including links with a school in Cuba and sponsoring a child in Romania. The curriculum is increasingly reflecting cultural diversity through well-planned projects, as well as the teaching of French and Spanish for pupils from Year 1 upwards. Pupils recently enjoyed working with different people from different cultures as they celebrated global languages day together.

The headteacher leads with high expectations of pupils and staff. This has had a positive impact on the attainment of pupils. There is a strong sense of purpose, with everyone working together to improve pupils' achievement. The rigour with which monitoring is carried out is ensuring accountability and is accelerating the progress pupils make through the school. The good improvements since the last inspection demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for sustained further improvement.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It holds the school rigorously to account, balanced with appropriate support and active participation in many aspects of school life.

The local authority provides good and effective support to the school.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2010

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - developing provision for writing in the Reception class
 - improving the precision of pupils' spelling, punctuation and sentence construction
 - ensuring that pupils' academic targets show them exactly what they need to do to achieve the next National Curriculum level.

- Improve pupils' mathematical skills by:
 - enhancing pupils' ability to manipulate number, including developing fluency with number bonds and times tables.

- Enhance the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that the work set is consistently finely matched to pupils' individual needs, including when they are taught in ability groups.

- Develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom by providing more opportunities for pupils to meet others from backgrounds different to their own.