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17 November 2011

Mr J Stevens
Headteacher
Bromley Hills Primary School
Granville Drive
Kingswinford
DY6 8LW

Dear Mr Stevens

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bromley Hills Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me and my colleague Simon Rowe, seconded Additional Inspector, when we inspected your school on 16 November 2011, for the time you gave and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would be grateful if you would also thank the staff and pupils for their help and cooperation. During the inspection, we visited eight lessons, all with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher, and observed the learning of pupils and children in all years.

Since the time of the previous inspection, the school has reorganised the management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It has also appointed new parental and community governors. In the five years prior to the previous inspection, the school had six different headteachers.

As a result of the inspection on 12 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Results in Key Stage 1 assessments show that attainment is broadly average. However, pupils then make inadequate progress. Consequently, Key Stage 2 test results have fallen and achievement is inadequate. While achievement in mathematics has risen slightly, it remains inadequate. Results for boys' writing were very low and well below those for the girls. Consequently, achievement in English is also inadequate. The school is below The Department for



Education's current minimum attainment and progression measures. Observations of lessons show that the pupils make good progress in some classes but in others, progress is no more than satisfactory. This is when lessons are not sufficiently challenging to make up for previous poor progress. The school's records show that while the progress made by pupils increased in 2009/10, it reverted to poor in 2010/11. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also poor.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Assessment information is used well by teachers so that lessons are generally matched to pupils' abilities. Lessons start by teachers sharing with pupils what they are expecting them to learn. Staff then explain what they are looking for in the pupils' work. In the best lessons, pupils contribute to this process. Marking has improved and pupils receive feedback on how well they have done and also how they could improve their work. The behaviour observed during the visit and comments made by pupils show that behaviour is good. Pupils all have suitable targets to show them how to improve from one level to the next, and these are frequently evaluated. The revised curriculum has been introduced. This includes specific activities to help improve boys' written work. Drama is also used effectively as a precursor to writing. Pupils enjoy working on themes and have produced some very impressive models – for example, the castles made by those who are studying Robin Hood.

Staff have responded well to greater stability in the leadership of the school and share the senior leaders' ambition. They welcome consistency in the way in which the school is run and what they are expected to do. The school's self-evaluation identifies areas that have been introduced, but it fails to evaluate the impact of these actions on outcomes. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teachers' plans. They also evaluate the quality of pupils' work by frequently looking at their books. Staff also monitor pupils' work by comparing books across the full age range during staff meetings. During the inspection, senior leaders demonstrated that they have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and learning. However, subject leaders do not have a good understanding of the quality of learning across all classes because they do not systematically evaluate the quality of teaching and learning through direct lesson observations. The school improvement plans are targeted at the most relevant areas and include some clear targets. However, some success criteria are vague and do not identify, clearly, the desired outcome. For example, while 'raise achievement' is a suitable criterion, it does not state the level to which it should be raised and, hence, it could be improved but still remain inadequate.

The school has been successful in improving some of the areas identified in the previous inspection report. For example in the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff have worked well to improve the transition into Year 1. This has included closer cooperation between staff from each phase. Children now attend the Year 1 area during the last term of their Reception Year. They start more formal lessons as they get closer to the time of transfer. Pupils who start Year 1 working below expectations follow a combination of a Year 1 curriculum and aspects of the Early

Years Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the school has failed to improve the pivotal area of pupil achievement, which has fallen. Consequently, its capacity to improve is inadequate.

The local authority has effectively supported the school through its School Improvement Partner and they have ensured that it continues to be supported by an education improvement adviser.

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

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- To continue the trend of improving progress, especially in mathematics, senior leaders should operate a rigorous programme to monitor and evaluate:
 - the use of assessment information in planning lessons to ensure that they match the learning needs of all pupils
 - marking to make sure it provides guidance on the next steps in learning
 - pupils' progress toward their individual learning targets.

- Strengthen the links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 to ensure a smooth transition in children's learning.