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Mrs J McNichol
Headteacher
Hemsworth Grove Lea Primary School
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Dear Mrs McNichol

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hemsworth Grove Lea Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 November 2011, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please give my thanks also to the Chair of the Governing Body and the pupils and members of staff who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 22 April 2010, the school was asked to tackle 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 early, unvalidated data for the school show that Year 6 results in the national tests in 2011 were higher in English than at the time of the last inspection and slightly higher in mathematics. Overall, given that the data is unvalidated, the results may be above average, though not significantly. The data indicate that the pupils made the progress that might be expected given their starting points. The school's data indicate that the pupils' attainment in 2010 was higher still.

Currently, the school data show a significantly greater proportion of the pupils than previously is making the expected levels of progress, and that a majority may be making better than expected progress. It was evident also during the lessons seen during this inspection and in the pupils' books that the pupils were making at least satisfactory progress. The pupils were confident learners, unafraid to take part in the lesson activities and to present their work to their classmates.

The teaching seen during this inspection was lively, interactive and engaged the pupils well. The pupils had positive views about the lessons and about lessons generally, describing opportunities to work individually and collectively. They enjoy learning and respond well to

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the teachers. They say that lessons have improved over the past year and become brisker and more interesting. The teachers' lesson-planning is usually detailed and shows consideration to providing different activities and levels of support for different groups of pupils, according to levels of ability. Teaching assistants are deployed well. The plans include a good range of different types of activity for the pupils and this is confirmed by the pupils, who spoke enthusiastically about the use of drama and information and communication technology in particular.

Usually, the pupils have a clear understanding of what they are required to do in lessons and what they are learning about. They are less clear about what precisely they have learned during the lesson and the teachers are not yet clarifying and reinforcing the learning sufficiently for the pupils at key moments during lessons. The quality of the marking of pupils' work has improved notably and is now frequently detailed and comprehensive, particularly in relation to literacy. The marking scheme is understood well by the pupils and motivates them to improve their work.

The monitoring of the teachers' work is regular and frequent. It involves a useful range of relevant checks, which are carried out diligently. The teachers confirm that the process is now much more thorough and rigorous than previously. They receive regular feedback on their work and have a greater sense of their accountability for the progress made by the pupils. The performance management system makes greater use of data about the pupils' attainment and progress than previously and there are frequent discussions throughout the year between the leaders and managers and individual teachers about the data. The leaders and managers have detailed knowledge about the work of the staff, but some of their judgements about the level of the quality do not yet take full account of what the data and other evidence indicate about the pupils' progress.

The governing body has become more involved in the process for monitoring the work of the school, including through joining the leaders and managers in visits to lessons and in analysing data on the pupils' attainment and progress. It has participated in training designed specifically to enable it to do so. It is supportive of the work of the school, but does not yet use the information it gathers to form its own judgements about the work of the school and use the judgements to guide the school's improvement. The pupils are provided with opportunities to learn about the wider world, but, since the last inspection, the school's work to extend its links for this consists largely of planning for new activities to be linked to the Olympic Games in 2012. The school has increased its efforts to promote good attendance, including taking stringent measures that have proved controversial with some parents and carers, particularly in relation to holidays taken during the school term, which are no longer authorised by the school. Overall, attendance remains broadly average, although there are signs of improvement. Rates are affected by significant absences of a small number of pupils, some of which are unavoidable, but not all.

The rigour of the improved monitoring processes has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. It has resulted in notably more consistent practice, particularly in curriculum and lesson-planning and in marking the pupils' work. A wider range of members of staff is now

involved in monitoring activities and some have taken part in leadership and management development programmes that have improved their capacity to carry out their roles. The staff have found their involvement in and the learning from the monitoring useful in developing their teaching. They reflect on the lessons conscientiously and carefully, adapting their planning accordingly, but do not always focus clearly enough on what the pupils have shown they know, understand and can do as a result of the lesson. The improvements are the result also of effective work with a range of other schools and external agencies. The school sets more challenging targets for the pupils' attainment and progress than it did previously, based on good-quality data. Those factors have contributed to improvements in the pupils' attainment since the last inspection and steadily improving rates of progress made by the pupils.

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

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure all teaching and progress is as good as the best, by:
 - injecting greater pace into some lessons so that pupils have enough time to work independently
 - checking that pupils always know what they are learning, what they have learnt and what they must do next
 - always providing work that is at the right level
 - focusing more sharply on pupils' learning when checking regularly on the quality of teaching.

- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of the school's work is rigorous, regular and focuses sharply on pupils' learning to help senior leaders more accurately evaluate all aspects of the school's performance
 - developing the role of the governing body so that it more effectively challenges the school's performance, holds the school to account for what it achieves and sets a clear direction for its work
 - extending links with the wider world to deepen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and further promote community cohesion.

- Raise attendance to at least national levels by giving its promotion a higher profile.