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17 November 2011

Mr J Fisher
The Headteacher
Brimsdown Primary School
Green Street
Enfield
Middlesex
EN3 7NA

Dear Mr Fisher

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of
Brimsdown Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please extend my sincere thanks to the staff and pupils we visited in lessons, and to members of the senior and middle leadership team, teachers and pupils whom we interviewed.

Three years ago, as a result of an amalgamation of an infant and a junior school, Brimsdown Primary School became a larger-than-average-sized primary school with an Early Years Foundation Stage comprising both Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, the school restructured its senior and middle leadership team. Very recently the school has entered into a partnership with a local outstanding school with a focus on improving the quality of teaching and strengthening the capacity of leadership.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 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 satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils start in Key Stage 1 with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Over the period 2008 to 2011, national test results show that by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, under half of them, do not attain or exceed the age-related Level 4 in both English and mathematics. Moreover, a

significant minority of pupils, who are more able, do not attain the higher Level 5 in both subjects. This means that attainment at Key Stage 2 is significantly below the national average and pupils make inadequate progress in their learning. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, mathematics has been identified by the school as a continuing area of weakness. The school's data in 2011 show significant improvement in pupils' progress and attainment in writing, reading and mathematics in Years 1 to 3. Since September 2011, through more effective tracking of pupils' progress, the school has identified those Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who underachieve and have gaps in their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. Subsequently, senior managers have prioritised specific interventions for them, including programmes such as, 'reading recovery style', 'talking partners', 'toe by toe' and 'catch up maths', as well as organising Saturday revision classes. However, according to the school's data, current Year 6 pupils are projected to achieve levels that are significantly below average in writing and mathematics. This is because the school has not successfully tackled the variable quality of teaching across the school in these two subjects, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6.

In the majority of lessons observed across the school, teachers built on their good relations with pupils and fostered a productive learning environment. However, teachers do not use the information on pupils' prior attainment, skills and knowledge to guide their planning in order to provide tasks and activities that meet the needs of all pupils. Therefore, pupils lack challenge in their learning. In particular, more able pupils are not extended in their skills and knowledge. In addition, where the pace of learning is not suited to pupils' abilities, those of lower ability struggle to understand basic skills and concepts. These are critical to ensuring that they improve their understanding and development of mathematics and writing. In Years 1 to 4, inspectors observed some good teaching where teachers clearly knew their pupils' potential and planned activities and tasks that ensured pupils were challenged and well supported and aspired to higher levels of attainment. However, in the majority of lessons observed across the school, teachers were not sufficiently checking their pupils' learning and progress. Marking of pupils' work does not give pupils adequate feedback on how to improve or the next steps in their learning. Even in good examples of assessed work, for instance in the lower years, teachers do not ensure that pupils have redrafted or corrected their work before moving on to the next stage of learning. A significant minority of pupils interviewed, especially in Year 5, did not know their learning targets and what they needed to do to improve.

Since the last inspection, pupils' behaviour has improved and is broadly satisfactory. In many instances, it is good during lessons. Fixed term exclusions of pupils have reduced. Attendance rates have improved and are above average. However, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are disproportionately represented amongst those who are persistently absent.

The school's monitoring of teaching has not been effective in addressing the shortcomings observed by inspectors. This is because senior and middle leaders do not focus adequately on all pupils' learning and progress, nor do they ensure that

learning objectives, outcomes and activities are well suited to pupils' abilities and skills levels.

Since the beginning of this term, the school has ensured that phase leaders give more targeted support to teachers in the classroom, through sharing and modelling good teaching and assessment. Senior managers are aware that this has been more successful in Years 1 to 4 than in Years 5 and 6 and the school is reviewing its strategies.

Parents and carers interviewed by inspectors were highly positive about the communication they now have with the school and the information they receive on their children. They greatly appreciate the number of opportunities they have to take part in school activities. These include the homework club where parents and carers are given practical guidance and tips on how to help their children with mathematics and English homework. Since the amalgamation, the headteacher has worked effectively to create a school where all staff feel valued and appreciate the support they receive from phase leaders and members of the senior leadership team. In addition, despite a period of turbulence over the last two years, owing to staff absence through illness, staff attendance has now stabilised and improved. The school has successfully demonstrated the capacity to improve teaching and raise attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, but has yet to effectively embed similar improvements in Key Stage 2.

The support that the school has received from the local authority since the last inspection has not been timely or sufficiently well targeted on the quality of teaching. This has not helped the school to develop further than satisfactory capacity in raising achievement.

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

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
 - embedding new tracking systems to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress
 - ensuring that teachers match work more closely to the needs of pupils, therefore building upon what they already know and can do.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - eradicating inadequate practice and move teaching from satisfactory to good through a programme of staff training, support and challenge
 - implementing a more rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Ensure that parents feel listened to and that their views are taken into account by:
 - improving lines of communication as planned
 - increasing opportunities for parents to share in the life of the school.