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Mrs V Marsh-Ballard
Liden Primary School
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Swindon
Wiltshire
SN3 6EX

Dear Mrs Marsh-Ballard

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Liden Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to staff, governors and the pupils.

A number of significant changes have occurred since the previous inspection. A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed and took up their posts from September 2010. The headteacher was previously the deputy at the school. The roles and responsibilities of middle managers have been increased. A new Chair of the Governing Body took up post in September 2011. One new specialist teaching assistant has been appointed. The number of pupils on roll has dropped slightly due to the opening of a new school locally and changes in catchment areas. Classes have been reorganised. A new satellite class has been opened for pupils from the adjoining special school.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 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 new senior leadership team have introduced a large number of initiatives that are driving the school forward at pace. They have complementary skills which has developed the school's capacity to improve and enabled them to set a clear and ambitious direction for school improvement. They have swiftly created an ethos of cohesion, where everyone is working together successfully to raise pupils' aspirations

and achievements. Middle managers are now better equipped to develop others and are clear on their increased roles, responsibilities and accountability for pupils' achievement. Initiatives are leading to an improving trend in pupils' attainment and an increased rate of progress. However, some inconsistencies remain in how well these are embedded between age groups and classes. Teachers talk with enthusiasm about 'buddying' and professional development opportunities to observe and share good practice. They recognise that this is bringing more consistency to their work, improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.

Since the last inspection, attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has risen and is now above the national average for the first time in four years. This is testament to the highly focused work in raising expectations and aspirations, particularly, although not exclusively, in English and mathematics. As a result, the level of challenge has increased across the school for all pupils, including for the most able, and pupils are excited to be learning. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 remained broadly the same as at the last inspection. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicates this rapid progress is continuing in Key Stage 2 and progress is starting to accelerate in Key Stage 1. Pupils talk with genuine enthusiasm about the changes to the profile of reading and how this is having an impact on their writing, especially in sentence structure. They equally enjoy the mathematics challenges set at the beginning of every school day. Pupils take pride in their work and how it is presented in their books, and in displays that celebrate their work.

The curriculum in Key Stage 1 has been revised successfully to better match pupils' needs, and includes a wide range of activities and resources, including practical tasks. As a result, pupils are showing more engagement with learning, which is helping to improve their achievement. The Quest project in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is an innovative approach to stimulate learning and produced some inspired writing about 'The man on the moon, Bob'. One child wrote movingly that Bob 'sleeps soundly bathed in moonbeams'. In the Year 3 and 4 mathematics lessons seen, pupils benefited from working with others of similar abilities and from tasks that challenged their thinking. They showed a broad range of strategies to successfully work out solutions. Occasionally, pupils were too easily distracted from their learning by low-level tasks.

The use of assessment and monitoring information has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers use the information to carefully plan work that is better matched to the needs of all pupils. Pupils' levels of concentration and work rate have increased, as has the level of challenge as a result. Information enables early identification and intervention with pupils who have gaps in their learning. Intervention groups are robust, support is comprehensive and pupils make significant gains in knowledge and understanding in a short time. The use of consistent procedures such as WALT (What I am learning today) and WILF (What am I looking for) in lessons helps pupils understand what they are aiming to learn. However, there are missed opportunities to refer to the WALT throughout the lesson to keep pupils, and at times staff, focused on the intended learning. Teacher and

teaching assistant intervention, at the correct time, enables pupils to make swifter progress. Pupils understand how well they are doing; they know their targets and what to do next to improve their work because of consistent use of marking strategies and verbal feedback. Teachers recognise that not enough time is given for pupils to reflect and respond to the helpful comments. Pupils use a broad range of self-assessment and evaluation strategies pertinent to their age. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to exploit this further, especially to observe and evaluate each other's work. Teachers are held more robustly to account for pupils' presentation of their work, their progress in the class, and recognise their responsibility for contributing to pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.

The local authority provides effective support through moderation of lessons, the sharing of good practice, and in monitoring activities and discussions with the headteacher on self-evaluation judgements. Good links have been created with the pre-school and local secondary school to support pupils' next steps in education and learning.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise standards in mathematics, especially for the most-able pupils, by increasing the challenge provided in their work.
- Increase rate of pupils' progress, especially in Years 3 and 4, by:
 - extending the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into Year 1 so that activities better meet pupils' learning needs and levels of maturity
 - setting clear markers for pupils' rates of progress in Years 3 and 4 so that staff and pupils are able to work steadily towards expected outcomes for Year 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - sharing good practice in the school
 - ensuring the good work in helping pupils to understand how to improve is consistently applied
 - raising teachers' expectations for pupils' concentration and involvement, and for the pace, quality and presentation of their work.