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30 November 2011

Mrs Butt
Headteacher
Eldon Primary School
Eldon Street
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 7YE

Dear Mrs Butt

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Eldon 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 telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body and local authority who took time to speak with me.

Since the previous inspection, an associate headteacher took up post in September 2010 and became the permanent headteacher in April 2011. There is a new senior leadership team in place. There has also been a significant change in staff with all but one teacher leaving. The number of pupils has risen by approximately 30 in the past year and the class organisation was revised so that pupils are taught in single-age groups each morning. Three new governors have joined the governing body, two of whom are parents and carers.

As a result of the inspection on 15 and 16 of June 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.

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' achievement. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, for example, almost all pupils attained the expected Level 4 in English in 2011, which is an increase of 47% on the previous year. There was also a significant improvement in pupils' attainment in mathematics. In each year group a greater proportion of pupils are closer to the level they should be at for their age. Leaders are aware that there is still work to be done, however, to ensure all groups of pupils reach the levels they are capable of, particularly the higher-attaining pupils and boys.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The rate of pupils' progress and the quality of their learning in lessons have improved. The large majority of pupils, for example, made faster than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In lessons, pupils are engaged, enthusiastic and are actively involved throughout. They have plenty of opportunities to speak with partners and explain their thoughts and answers to questions which mean they make better progress in their confidence, understanding and their skills. The pace of their learning has quickened because teachers split lessons up into short bouts of teaching time and activities so that pupils are not sitting listening for too long and so that time is maximised. Time is also used well to extend pupils' skills across all subjects in the curriculum. In one lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully linked work on play scripts with the artist Salvador Dali.

There has been good improvement in the marking of pupils' work and the use of assessment in lessons. There is still some work to do to ensure marking is consistently effective in all year groups. In most classes, teachers provided some useful tips for pupils to improve their work, related their teaching to what different groups of pupils need to learn next and enabled pupils to assess their own learning. In a few year groups, marking is less effective because teachers' comments cannot be read by pupils or pupils do not have the chance to follow up on the teachers' tips for improvement.

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' attendance and reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Part of this success has been due to increased information to and work with parents and carers. All staff have worked hard to promote attendance through, for example, attendance week, reward systems and new policies and procedures.

The key to the school's success has been the appointment of the headteacher. The school's capacity to improve has been strengthened. The headteacher has skilfully established systems to improve aspects of teaching such as joint lesson observations with subject leaders. She and senior leaders use the information they receive from checking and evaluating teachers' plans and pupils' work, from talking to pupils and from analysing data. They have an increasingly accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governance has also improved. Members of the governing body have been trained and are more knowledgeable and able to ask the right questions to challenge the school and to support it in improving.

The local authority has been involved with the school for the last two years and has provided good support. Specialists in school management, English, mathematics, the management of behaviour and in teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage have provided training, support and challenge to staff.

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,
Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

September 2011



Annex

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

- Raise attainment and achievement by:
 - ensuring that teaching is of at least a consistently good enough quality to motivate pupils and improve their progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in different subjects across the curriculum
 - ensuring that teachers consistently provide pupils with structured comments on how to improve their work and ensuring that pupils respond regularly to teachers' marking.
- Improve attendance, but especially that of persistent absentees, by using a wider range of strategies to persuade those pupils who do not attend regularly enough, to do so.