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Mr Sasha Hamidi
Oaklands Primary School
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Dear Mr Hamidi

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Oaklands 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. Discussions with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, the pupils and representatives from the local authority were also very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave to talk to me and for the welcome I received.

Since the previous inspection the acting assistant headteacher has left the school. This post has not yet been filled pending a review of the staffing structure. Several staff members are covering areas of responsibility in acting roles, including the headteacher, who is acting as the coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities. Two teachers have left the school and been replaced. Two teachers are undergoing a phased return to work following long-term illness. A part-time parent partnership coordinator has been appointed. The role of the business manager has been redefined and she is now taking a more strategic role in the school. An educational psychologist is working in the school for one day per week. A counselling service is supporting vulnerable pupils individually and in small groups on one day each week. The chair and vice-chair of the governing body have swapped roles.

As a result of the inspection on 24 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.



Attainment in mathematics and English has risen since the last inspection. In English, a higher-than-average proportion of pupils attained nationally expected standards at Level 4 and Level 5. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 in mathematics improved significantly in 2011 and is now average.

Learning and progress in lessons are improving as a result of rigorous monitoring activities which are linked to effective professional development opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants. Useful feedback is given to teachers and followed through to subsequent observations. Where a lesson observation reveals that areas for improvement have not been acted upon and teaching is satisfactory, an immediate package of support and further monitoring is put in place. This has been effective in moving satisfactory teaching to good. A system of coaching teachers is embedded where good role models are paired with teachers needing support to improve lessons. For older pupils with gaps in their learning a range of small group and individual support programmes are accelerating progress. Leaders are clear, however, that progress needs to be more even across year groups.

Where teaching is good, lessons challenge and support pupils so that activities are matched well to pupils' needs. In one Year 6 English lesson, pupils were evaluating a piece of information text enthusiastically. They were introduced to challenging technical vocabulary and supported to identify the key features of information writing in order to apply this to their own work. In satisfactory lessons, assessment information is not always used precisely enough to build on prior learning. Sometimes pupils are not clear about the purpose for their learning and key teaching points are not explained thoroughly. In a small minority of lessons, because teaching has not engaged pupils' interest securely, there is too much off-task chatter and pupils need to be reminded to concentrate on their learning. Intervention strategies have been reviewed for their effectiveness and are now more successfully moving learning forward. For instance, children in Reception classes have regular individual reading sessions which are developing enthusiasm for reading and securing better progress.

The curriculum is improving and providing more engaging starting points for topics and greater enrichment opportunities. During the inspection older pupils were visited by an inspirational speaker and younger pupils were working with a visiting storyteller. Pupils say they enjoy these activities and when links are made in their learning. They would like more opportunities to do these things as well as more opportunities to explore art.

As a result of extensive moderation, assessments are now more secure. Pupils' achievements are tracked carefully and teachers are held to account for pupils' progress through regular review meetings. Marking and feedback have improved. Pupils appreciate the 'two stars and a wish' in their marking, particularly when they provide specific points to address and highlight clearly what they have done well. Learners also say they enjoy the extra challenges teachers give them when marking work. Pupils often respond to marking now but this is done better in some classes



than in others. Sometimes comments are not specific enough to show pupils how to improve. Pupils know their curriculum targets but they are not always fully understood.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. The physical environment has been enhanced through extensive refurbishment. Children are settled and enjoy their learning opportunities. The focused teaching of the sounds letters make is developing early reading skills well. Adult interventions are useful in extending language, particularly for children who are new to learning English. There are also many opportunities to develop language through play. One child was using the role-play garage area to talk on the telephone about a car repair. Children are developing their independent skills well when accessing resources to extend their own play. Good use is made of the limited outdoor environment to extend the curriculum. One group of children were building a space car using large-scale resources outside.

Careful and accurate assessments of pupil progress are recorded and have been validated. They show that progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. Children's work and teachers' observations are recorded in attractive learning journals. Parents and carers are invited to add to these, although some are not yet taking these opportunities. Assessments are used to plan for differentiated activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of what constitutes good practice and is supporting colleagues to improve in order to maintain consistently good outcomes. Her relationship with children and her enthusiasm for learning are a good model for others.

Leaders, including governors, are enthusiastic and ambitious for the school. High expectations are clearly communicated to all members of the school community, including through strong parental partnerships. The headteacher and his team have secured significant confidence in the school. Other leaders are becoming more effective in their role, including in monitoring the work of the school. All are clear that progress needs to improve quickly for all pupils. The deputy headteacher is now enabling other leaders to support their colleagues in improving teaching and learning. The local authority has been effective in supporting improvements, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is now supporting leaders in driving school improvement.

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

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Improve provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, through:
 - ensuring greater rigour in monitoring and supporting the work of the early years team to accelerate children’s progress
 - ensuring that adults have a thorough understanding of young children’s needs, make accurate observations to monitor and record progress, and plan appropriate activities
 - improving links between Nursery, Reception classes and Year 1 and developing greater consistency for all teaching to be at least good.

- Embed the new assessment and tracking system fully in all parts of the school so that:
 - assessments are accurate and inform teachers about the next steps in planning and teaching
 - teachers use a consistent approach to setting and using targets, especially in writing for Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics across the school, so that pupils of all abilities, including the most able, have work that is appropriately challenging.