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9 December 2011

Miss Christy  
Headteacher  
Langland Community School  
Langland Road  
Netherfield  
Milton Keynes  
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MK6 4HA

Dear Miss Christy

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Langland Community School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 December 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I am also grateful to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority representative who gave their time to speak to me. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and to the pupils for being so friendly, helpful and well behaved.

The basic characteristics of the school are very similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher, who was newly appointed at the time of the inspection, is on maternity leave until August 2011. In September 2011 the deputy headteacher was appointed as the acting headteacher and the Key Stage 2 leader was appointed as acting deputy headteacher.

As a result of the inspection on 13–14 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Following the last inspection, senior leaders, with valuable assistance from the local authority, quickly got to grips with identifying what needed to be done and set about remedying the weaknesses. Self-evaluation is accurate. The school's well-considered plan for improvement is closely linked to a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation. This provides the school with a greater degree of clarity in

pinpointing weaknesses, but initiatives are taking time to raise pupils' attainment. Effective guidance from the local authority is helping the governing body to play a more strategic role in the work of the school. As a result of the hard work and commitment of senior leaders and staff, pupils consistently behave well and they want to come to school as the curriculum is more appealing and they are eager to win the individual or class prize for good attendance.

However, despite recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' attainment has remained stubbornly low at the end of Year 6. There is a high turnover of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times. Many have circumstances that make them vulnerable. They and benefit from the significant support offered by learning mentors who help them overcome barriers to learning and settle so that they can begin to learn. Teaching has improved, but learning gaps, although closing, still exist from a time when staffing was less stable and there was some inadequate teaching. The school is quick to implement well-tailored intervention programmes where gaps in learning exist. Meticulous tracking of pupil progress shows that attainment has improved on last year for all year groups and this term, pupils are making better progress in Year 2 and 5, not in Year 3, who started from a low base and Year 4 where a legacy of inadequate teaching exists. In Year 6, pupils' reading and writing skills develop well but this is not the case for mathematics. The school has made important improvements in pupils' behaviour, attendance and teaching under the guidance of the acting headteacher. However, the impact of changes is only just beginning to be reflected in improved pupil outcomes. For this reason, the school has made satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The improving curriculum ensures that, across all areas of learning, there is a better progression of skills which is improving the essential skills that pupils need to make progress. Strategies such as learning walls and 'mission accomplished' steps to achieving success criteria are used consistently across the school to support pupils' learning. An improvement in behaviour means that pupils have a positive attitude to learning. However for many, the retention of new learning is difficult and constant consolidation is required to make learning secure before that progress can be made. Teachers plan interesting opportunities for pupils to grapple with problem solving. For example, in a science lesson, Year 1 pupils had to test which materials would be suitable to make boots for Puss in Boots. However for some it was a challenge too far as they struggled to decide what was waterproof and what was not. Work in books and in the classroom shows that pupils are applying their literacy and numeracy skills in science and other activities but many need learning strategies and the good support that they get from teaching assistants to be able to do this reliably.

Teachers consistently plan better opportunities for pupils to discuss things with their partners. As a result pupils talk confidently when trying to explain their thinking. Because their basic language skills are low, more opportunities are taken to extend and reinforce pupils' vocabulary so they can use it in their writing. Although there is some variation in expectation, handwriting is taught more systematically?? and work

in books shows a consistent policy towards presentation. It also shows that the reliance on worksheets has been eliminated.

Overall, teachers know their pupils well and use assessment more effectively to structure the small steps in learning matched to their ability. The level of challenge for pupils has improved in lessons although occasionally the challenge is too high and flexibility is needed to plan even smaller steps in order to make learning more accessible. There has been an improvement in the way teaching assistants are deployed, enabling them to make an important contribution to learning. Teaching assistants who are fluent in other languages are used more effectively to support those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. There has been a consistently good improvement in marking across the school. Pupils understand it and say that it helps them improve their work.

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

Barbara Atcheson  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Accelerate progress and, by June 2011 raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school by:
  - ensuring key skills in English, mathematics and science are well developed
  - building pupils' problem solving skills so they can use them reliably in writing, numeracy and science
  - helping pupils develop the use of a wide range of vocabulary to enrich their writing
  - improving standards of presentation.
  
- Ensure that by June 2011 all teaching is of consistently good quality or better by:
  - ensuring all teachers use assessment more effectively to plan lessons that match the needs of and provided appropriate challenge for all pupils especially the more able
  - helping pupils understand how to improve through consistently good-quality marking
  - reducing the number of worksheets used in Key Stage 1
  - ensuring the deployment of teaching assistants enables them to make a good contribution to the promotion of learning.