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13 December 2011

Mr Alan Bayford  
The Executive Headteacher  
West Minster Primary School  
St George's Avenue  
Sheerness  
ME12 1ET

Dear Mr Bayford

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of West Minster Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2011, for the time you and Mr Harrison gave to our preparatory meeting and the information you provided during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to your local authority adviser and the members of the governing body who gave time to meet with me.

Since the previous inspection staffing has remained relatively stable. The head of school took up his appointment in September 2010 and the wellbeing team leader started at the beginning of September 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 22 and 23 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

There is a strongly rising trend in pupils' attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, although progress is satisfactory across the school it has not been rapid enough to make sure that all older pupils make up the shortfall from previously slow progress. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment levels remain too low. Although there has been some improvement in mathematics, this continues to be the weakest subject with pupils making relatively slower progress across all age groups. Nevertheless, the work in lessons and books confirms that pupils are generally making satisfactory progress and this is beginning to accelerate. There remain inconsistencies between classes regarding the quality of presentation and there are still times when pupils understand and can do the work but are given more of the same rather than being offered more difficult work to extend their learning.



The school is identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' learning and more pupils are now working at the expected levels. Pupils know their targets for English and mathematics and these are regularly reviewed. Increasingly accurate assessment information is being used regularly to identify pupils who will benefit from additional small group or one-to-one interventions. The monitoring of this work is not yet sharp enough to fully assess the value of the different activities and evaluate their impact on pupils' learning.

Relationships are good. Pupils are responding to more consistent behaviour management and usually behave well. They are attentive in lessons and keen to complete their work. However, attendance remains a challenge. Levels of attendance have not improved and remain below average. The attendance of a significant group of pupils is exceptionally low and this is having a negative impact on their achievement.

Since the last inspection there has been a strong focus on ensuring that the building blocks for effective teaching and learning are secure and consistent across the school. In the Nursery and Reception classes provision has improved and children enjoy a wider range of opportunities. Immediate action was taken following the inspection to repair the kitchen gate and increase the safety of children. Across the school, teachers' planning is consistent with well-targeted use of classroom support. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to work together and discuss their learning and more time is spent actively engaged in learning rather than listening to the adults. Teachers make increasingly good use of questions during lessons to focus and extend the learning. This is strongest in the early years classes but, during the visit, other examples were seen, such as in a Year 2 lesson when the teacher reminded pupils about finding interesting words to improve their snowman stories. Classrooms are well organised with helpful displays to celebrate pupils' achievement and support the learning in different subjects. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is conscientious and relates to the learning objectives. Increasingly, pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments. However, this is not as useful as it could be because the comments are not specific enough in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning.

Leadership and management responsibilities are now shared amongst the strengthened senior leadership team. The head of school and phase leaders contribute effectively to regular monitoring and provide follow-up support and training for their colleagues. This means that the executive headteacher is able to fulfil a more strategic role. The impact of the additional leadership time for special educational needs is less secure given the short time that this has been in place. The school's self-evaluation tends to be optimistic rather than accurate and highlights where the school would like to be rather than where it actually is. The improvement targets in the current Kent Challenge plan for the school are not always sufficiently sharp in terms of expected outcomes. The pace of improvement, although speeding up now, has not been as rapid as it might have been and there is a lot more to do to ensure that all children achieve their potential.



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

Sheena MacDonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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

- Raise the overall quality of teaching and learning to good, by July 2011, in order to lift attainment and achievement by:
  - improving the teaching of mathematics throughout the school so that pupils make faster and more consistent progress in all year groups and girls are helped to enjoy mathematics more
  - making sure that, in writing, all pupils know their targets and are given more help to edit and improve their work, especially the most able pupils
  - making sure that marking gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work and time to act on teachers' comments
  - speeding up the pace of lessons, especially by ensuring that pupils do not sit on the carpet too long listening to teachers
  - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with wider opportunities for outside learning and greater overall challenge in activities, especially for the most able children.
- Work closely with parents to raise attendance, especially for children in the youngest classes.
- Strengthen leadership by:
  - the executive headteacher sharing and delegating responsibilities to senior and middle leaders when the new head of school joins the team
  - making sure that monitoring focuses precisely on the key priorities for improving teaching and learning
  - providing more time for the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The gate to the kitchen area in the Nursery must be repaired so that this area is made inaccessible to children, unless accompanied by an adult.