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Mr C Rowland
Headteacher
New Road Primary School
Sowerby New Road
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West Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Rowland

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of New Road Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils who came to read their books with me and talk with me about behaviour in school and to the representative of the local authority who took time to meet me.

Since the previous inspection two teachers have left, one of whom was the assistant headteacher. Two teachers started, one of whom is employed on a temporary contract and works half a week. The business manager also left but still supports the school in a part-time capacity. The local authority is seeking cooperation/federation with an outstanding primary school and an extended partnership with the local secondary school. New Road has become subject to local authority reorganisation proposals and the number of pupils on roll has reduced even further.

As a result of the inspection on 6 October 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is inadequate.

The school's targets for the standards pupils are to reach and the progress they should make are ambitious and challenging. However, in 2011 the targets were missed by a considerable margin because pupils' attainment in English and mathematics deteriorated. Only 29% of pupils attained the expected Level 4 in English, which is significantly below floor standards (the government's minimum expectations for primary schools), and only 64% gained this standard in



mathematics. The progress pupils are making has slowed significantly since the previous inspection. For example, in 2011 only half of the pupils in Year 6 made the expected two levels of progress in English, which is significantly below floor standards. Progress in the majority of lessons is slow. This is often because the pace of teaching is pedestrian; pupils waste time completing work they already know how to do, particularly in writing; and activities that pupils complete too often rely on filling in low-level worksheets which hampers pupils' thinking and development of knowledge.

Pupils' attainment throughout the school has not improved enough since the previous inspection. In Year 2, for example, only just over half of pupils reached the expected Level 2 in reading and writing in 2011. There are signs of recovery, however, in reading and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Pupils confidently read and work out unfamiliar words and are able to comprehend what they read. The progress that higher attaining pupils make, an issue at the previous inspection, is still not good enough to enable them reach the standards of which they are capable and the progress they make has not quickened. This is often because teachers' expectations in lessons are too low, these pupils complete the same work as all other pupils in the class and they do not have enough opportunities to answer open-ended questions.

The quality of teaching has not improved enough since the last inspection. In too many classes, teachers and teaching assistants do too much of the work for pupils, which hinders their achievement. Similarly in too many classes, teachers' and assistants' questions to pupils are low-level and closed, which prevents pupils thinking, explaining or applying their skills themselves. In one class, however, the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are motivated, inspired and make rapid progress in their learning because the teaching is quick paced and the questions and tasks make pupils think. The teacher assesses pupils' progress during the lesson, quickly moves on when pupils understand or slows down to reinforce the concepts with which they are having more difficulty.

Children's progress and achievement in the Reception class is hampered significantly by a lack of outdoor provision. This is despite the fact there is a well-appointed outdoor resource on the same playground but within the children's centre which is used by nursery children.

There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. During this inspection visit, pupils in each class were working well together in pairs and groups on tasks and there were examples where pupils had some responsibility for their own learning. There were no pupils observed using information and communication technology during the visit. Since the previous inspection, staff have reviewed and improved the curriculum. Pupils now make links between subjects and are involved in more exciting activities. They have opportunities to use their English and mathematical skills and knowledge across subjects. Improvements have been made to the curriculum to ensure pupils in mixed-age classes are not disadvantaged but

the changes have not had enough impact on pupils' achievement. Weaknesses identified in a previous inspection of the quality of provision and learning in music have not been fully tackled.

This inspection was carried out with no prior notice to the school. Pupils' behaviour and conduct have not improved since the inspection as confirmed by pupils themselves as well as by observations of lessons and of behaviour in and around school. In most lessons, particularly with exciting fast-paced teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, they respond well to adults' requests and they show respect for each other. Occasionally, however, as at the time of the previous inspection, learning is disrupted in some lessons by pupils' behaviour. A few pupils ignore the teachers' requests, shout out inappropriately and refuse to work with class mates. During the visit, a small number of pupils showed over-familiarity and a lack of respect, close to being cheeky or insolent. Staff could identify examples of how their work had changed the lives and the conduct of individual pupils with a background of behavioural difficulties. This was confirmed by pupils themselves who said that teachers in the school liked them and had helped them to change their behaviour. Pupils said that name-calling was a common feature of school life but prejudice-based bullying, such as racism or homophobia, was rare. Since the inspection pupils' attendance has fluctuated. On occasions, absence has increased, particularly persistent absence, to be well above the local and national average. On the day of the inspection a relatively high proportion of pupils were late for school.

The capacity for the school to improve has declined and has been hampered by an uncertain future. The rigour and impact of actions to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching have not been formal, frequent or good enough to secure improvements. The school has a prioritised and well-formed plan for improvement written in partnership with other schools yet this has not improved pupils' achievement. A lack of a sharp focus on the development of pupils' spiritual, moral or social development has not improved pupils' attitudes or behaviour. Although the staff's actions have shown some positive progress against some points for improvement identified at the last inspection there needs to be a renewed and determined focus to improve the quality of teaching, the quality of outdoor provision in the Reception class, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour.

The local authority has provided some helpful, honest and accurate evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Links with other schools are beginning to show some impact but thus far, is limited.

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

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012

Annex

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

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment, especially in literacy, by;
 - giving pupils more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning
 - fostering more paired and group work, thus allowing pupils to act as resources for each other's learning
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use computers as a tool for personal research
 - ensuring that assessment is used consistently well in all classes so that teachers can plan work which challenges all pupils, particularly the more able, to reach the standards of which they are capable.

- Continue to develop the curriculum so that it meets the needs and interests of all pupils more closely, by:
 - providing them with more exciting activities which motivate them to want to learn
 - introducing even more activities which are relevant to mixed-age classes
 - giving pupils opportunities to see links between subjects and to reinforce their skills in literacy and numeracy across all areas of the curriculum, and for real-life situations.