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Mrs M Mann
Headteacher
Aldersbrook Primary School
Harpenden Road
Wanstead
London
E12 5HL

Dear Mrs Mann

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Aldersbrook Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when we inspected your school on 18 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Could I also convey my thanks to the pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative from the local authority whom I spoke to.

Since the last inspection a deputy and one assistant headteacher have been appointed to the senior leadership team. The senior leadership team comprises of four members. A new Chair of the Governing Body has also been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 December 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.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In 2011 pupils achieved levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 which were in line with national expectations, reflecting a similar picture to recent years. Overall, attainment has remained broadly average. Pupils attained marginally better results in mathematics overall as compared to English. The proportion of high grades pupils achieved in English was below average. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those for whom English is an additional language did not make the progress expected of them. Early indications are that this is set to improve in 2012. In many



lessons seen, pupils were encouraged to discuss their work with others. In a good Year 4 lesson the use of 'talk partners' and small group discussions were highly effective in promoting good progress and deepening pupils' learning. Although the majority of pupils know their attainment targets, they are not always clear how these targets relate to their daily performance. The regular and meticulous review of pupils' performance by the senior leadership team is having a good impact on teachers' identification of targeted support needed for those pupils falling behind.

The quality of teaching

The majority of teaching remains at the level noted in the last inspection. Teachers use pupils' assessment information to plan work for pupils' differing needs, although too few of the tasks enable the most able pupils to achieve well. There is too much teaching to the average ability. In some lessons seen there were missed opportunities to stretch and challenge higher-attaining pupils and some less able pupils were not guided well in their work. Lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not challenging children's learning. In a Nursery lesson, children were not directed into focused learning quickly as there was too much 'carpet time'. In the strongest lessons seen, teachers injected a good pace which enabled pupils to learn quickly and assess their own understanding well. In a well-taught Year 6 English lesson, the teacher used high-level vocabulary to stretch and challenge pupils to develop their skills of creative writing. Pupils responded effectively and developed good drafts of well-described paragraphs. Activities in the Nursery are low level or not structured to enable children to learn well and make good progress.

Support to improve the quality of teachers' marking has brought about more recent improvements and staff have felt they have benefitted from the professional development given. In the best examples of marking, pupils are given detailed next steps with indications of how they relate to their National Curriculum attainment target. However, it remains too inconsistent. This also reflects the views of some pupils, who said marking does not always help them know what to do to improve.

The outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is shared by the Nursery and Reception children; it is adequately sized and satisfactorily equipped. However, activities in the outdoor area are not well planned, particularly for Nursery children, so they do not develop or challenge children's learning effectively.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons continues to be generally good. They are keen to learn and are considerate of each other and of staff. They say incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively by staff. The level of attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and was above average in 2011. Leaders and managers have taken good actions to improve attendance. National comparative data for the school shows attendance has continued to rise in 2012.



The quality of leadership and management of the school

The relatively new senior leadership team have quickly gained a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement and the new leadership appointments have assumed their responsibilities effectively. The headteacher provides a clear direction. This has helped developed a better capacity to improve, reflected in improvements, including the significant rise in pupils' attendance. The extensive support for middle leaders such as the phase and subject leaders is enabling them to carry out their roles better; however, their contribution to school improvement is yet to be fully effective. Monitoring of individual pupils' performance is undertaken well, although information on the performance of specific groups is not yet used effectively. Scrutiny of the quality of teaching has identified the key areas for improvement and a structure of personalised support for teachers is increasingly becoming effective. Self-evaluation reflects a realistic assessment of the progress the school is making. However, targets are not always sharply focused to bring about the rapid improvements required to improve pupils' achievement further.

Senior leaders are focusing their attention on improving the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The new Chair of the Governing Body is highly knowledgeable about the hurdles faced by the school and monitoring of the school's work is more penetrating and systematic. The governing body has implemented strategies such as link governors more closely reviewing the school's performance in key areas such as literacy, numeracy, the Early Years Foundation Stage and safeguarding and inclusion. The full impact of these measures is yet to be fully realised. The local authority School Improvement Partner challenges and supports the school appropriately, especially in the areas of teaching and pupils' attainment.

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

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise attainment and increase rates of learning and progress through the school by:
 - using information from assessments to plan work that is consistently well matched to all pupils' needs.
 - using marking and target setting to ensure that all pupils have clear guidance that shows them what they need to do to improve their work.
 - using the outdoor areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage more effectively to develop children's learning.

- Develop and extend the skills of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, in monitoring the school's work in order to secure improvement and consistency, particularly in teaching and learning, and pupils' achievement.