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19 January 2012

Ms. Angela Wilson  
Headteacher  
Lawn Primary School  
High Street  
Gravesend  
DA11 9HB

Dear Ms Wilson

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Lawn 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. Would you please pass on my particular thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative of the local authority with whom I met.

Following a period of turbulence, staffing has been relatively stable since the school was last inspected. There have been some additional staff as the result of a rising roll but no teachers have left the school. The proportion of pupils believed to speak a first language other than English is increasing, with a rise in admissions of pupils from European Union states in Eastern Europe. However, year groups remain small. Only ten Year 6 pupils have validated results for 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 1–2 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**

When the school was last inspected pupils' attainment was judged to be low. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 rose in 2011 but remains lower than the national average, particularly in English. Attainment rose considerably in mathematics with the proportion reaching the expected Level 4 now in line with that found nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 for both English and mathematics also rose, so that the school reached the proportion expected nationally. However, attainment remains low overall because too few

pupils reach the higher Level 5, with no pupils reaching Level 5 in English. Although numbers are low, over time and across year groups girls do better than boys.

The school's tracking data, together with observations of pupils learning in class and scrutiny of their work, indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 are set to continue the rise in attainment, with more pupils reaching Level 5 in English and mathematics. Pupil progress meetings have been effectively used to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge so that teachers are now able to plan work which more closely reflects what pupils need to learn. Good learning is characterised by high expectations, well-organised and appropriate resources, a brisk pace and the good use of questioning to ensure all pupils remain engaged.

The recent improvements in attendance have been consolidated. While attendance in 2011 was close to the national average it is currently above average. This is a good indication of pupils' greater enthusiasm for learning and their positive attitudes. Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They behave well in lessons and around the school.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teachers are open, evaluative and eager to improve their practice. The headteacher accurately assesses the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and provides useful feedback on how to improve. All teaching observed during the monitoring visit was at least satisfactory and some good practice was seen. In all lessons, pupils are eager to learn, have positive attitudes, and relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils are strong. Almost all pupils listen with care and respect, although when the pace of learning slows or teachers talk for too long some lose concentration. In the best teaching, expectations are high and explicit, so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to do and how much work they are expected to produce. In less effective teaching, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and too little doing their work. While pupils work well together, opportunities for them to work in pairs or as part of a group are not fully exploited so that the pace of learning slows. Pupils are confident, say they enjoy school and feel very safe. Many of the youngest pupils are eager to share their experiences and are keen to talk about the hats and pictures they have made.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and continue to behave well. Even when they are required to sit and listen for too long most pupils remain ready to learn. The school has worked hard to broaden its relationship with the local community. The school choir is a welcome visitor to local churches, gatherings of older people and the nearby major shopping complex. The school has developed a link with a primary school in Malawi, and is looking forward to the forthcoming visit by the school's headteacher in May.

There are appropriate procedures in place to safeguard the welfare of pupils and staff training in child protection is up to date.

### **The quality of leadership and management of the school**

As a result of the focus of the leadership team on raising attainment through improving specific areas of provision such as teaching, the curriculum and pupils' cultural development, achievement has improved, particularly by the end of Year 6. In order to more rigorously identify gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge, the attainment and progress of each pupil are monitored and discussed in regular pupil progress meetings. While this has resulted in a sharper focus on achievement, the school's improvement planning does not make a sufficiently explicit link between improvements in provision and measurable outcomes for pupils. This makes it difficult for the school to identify those strategies that have been most successful and to secure the best value for money. For example, it is unclear how ambitious targets to improve the quality of teaching are expected to impact on raising pupils' achievement.

The curriculum has developed in some innovative ways since the school was last inspected. 'Lawn University' was originally an idea from the school council. They were keen to see aspects of the curriculum better reflect teachers' skills and experience and more closely mirror their own interests. As a result, individual modules such as forensic science, ballet, jewellery making and sales now make the curriculum more appealing. A wide range of after-school clubs are now offered, including Latin American, ballroom and street dancing, karate, homework club and sports and musical activities.

The Chair of the Governing Body knows the school well and the governing body increasingly holds it to account in respect of improvements in provision, such as teaching and the curriculum. It is less successful in holding the school fully to account because the school development plan does not make a sufficiently explicit link between improvements in provision and the anticipated impact on pupils' attainment.

The school has valued the continuing support it has received from the local authority and its link advisers. However, some reviews of progress lack a sufficiently sharp focus on helping the school to develop systems to judge the impact of its actions on how well pupils are doing.

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

Robert Lovett  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - building on and further accelerating pupils' progress
  - ensuring that expectations are consistently high enough to enable pupils to reach their potential.
  
- Ensure monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning are more sharply focused on outcomes for pupils' attainment at all key stages by:
  - more rigorously identifying gaps in pupils' subject knowledge in mathematics and English, particularly writing
  - taking actions to address the gaps and measuring the impact of these actions.