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Mrs Liz Mulcahy
Headteacher
Felmore Primary School
Davenants
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SS13 1QX

Dear Mrs Mulcahy

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Felmore Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please would you also pass on my thanks to the local authority representatives and the Chair of the Governing Body for their time in our discussions.

Since the last inspection, a substantive headteacher was appointed in January 2012 and there are three new members of the senior leadership team. A number of staff have left and there are currently three full-time teachers on temporary contracts. There remains one mixed-age class for Year 1 and 2 pupils and there are now two single-age classes per year group. There are five new governors and a new Chair of the Governing Body.

As a result of the inspection on 24 May 2011, 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.

Pupils' achievement is improving. A concentrated focus on English and mathematics across all areas of the curriculum is having a positive impact. Slow but steady progress is being made in narrowing the gap from previous underachievement, so that standards in English and mathematics, whilst they remain low, are gradually moving in the right direction. A number of newly instigated interventions, supported by all staff and, in particular, the learning support assistants are starting to have a positive impact on raising attainment. These interventions are specifically targeted to the needs of lower achievers. Improved training for learning support assistants

means that the support they are giving is clearly targeted at helping pupils to learn and thus raising standards. The school has rightly identified serious underachievement for some boys, particularly in Year 5. One-to-one tuition for those identified ensures that boys are actively engaged in their learning and, although recently initiated, is already starting to narrow the gap. Strategies such as the weekly 'practical challenge day' to raise standards in mathematics are also having an impact on raising achievement.

The quality of teaching is improving. A consistent approach to what is expected from teachers and more rigorous monitoring of lessons, with helpful constructive feedback, have resulted in increasing numbers of both satisfactory and good lessons. In the monitoring visit, no inadequate lessons were seen. Teachers' planning is more relevant to the different needs of pupils, although there is still more to be done to ensure that work is consistently targeted to individual needs. Good progress has been made in improving teachers' marking. It is consistent across year groups, accessible to pupils and relevant. Consequently, pupils are much clearer about what the teachers' expectations are and what they need to do to improve their work. This, in turn, is having a positive effect in a number of areas as pupils are becoming more confident in what is expected of them. Assessment is more accurate, and is rigorously monitored by the newly formed senior leadership team. Pupil progress meetings are regularly held and individual pupils' progress discussed. Where individuals are identified as underachieving or not making the progress expected, clear intervention strategies are introduced to support them.

The governing body meets regularly and receives detailed information regarding progress and attainment of pupils across the school. It is acting more as a critical friend and its members are encouraged to visit the school regularly where possible. Behaviour throughout the school is good. A mutual appreciation and awareness of helping others pervades the school. This was seen, for example, at lunchtime, when 'reading buddies' come together. Pupils who may not get the opportunity to read regularly at home are supported by older pupils in the school who regularly listen to them read. Pupils' work is appreciated and valued and there are good displays around the school reflecting this. Leaders and managers are more rigorous in monitoring the impact of these strategies and are striving to raise standards further.

The local authority continues to provide effective support for the school. Local authority advisers have worked closely with the leadership team in monitoring improvements and providing expertise. Teaching and learning consultants have worked alongside key teachers sharing good practice. A bespoke package for the school on the development of phonics teaching has had a positive impact on younger children's reading and writing skills. This external support through the local authority statement of action has helped the school to raise its own internal capacity to improve, which is good.

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

Susan Vale
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2011

- Improve attainment in literacy and numeracy throughout the school by:
 - using assessment information to consistently plan lessons which offer high challenge to pupils of all abilities, especially for those who are more able
 - ensuring that marking identifies clearly for pupils how they can improve a piece of work and make better progress.
- Raise the quality of teaching to good or better throughout the school by regular and rigorous monitoring of lessons by all senior leaders and managers.
- Develop links between curriculum subjects to provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills.