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Ms Nicole Bradley
The Headteacher
Parkway Primary School
Alsike Road
Erith
Kent
DA18 4DP

Dear Ms Bradley

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Parkway Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 May 2012 and for the time you gave to our phone discussion and planning meeting. Thank you also for the information which you provided before and during the inspection and for your engagement in joint lesson observations. Discussions with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority were also very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave and for the welcome I received.

Since the previous inspection, one teacher has left the school and was replaced with a temporary teacher. The seconded deputy headteacher continues to work at the school until the end of the school year and the governing body is in the process of recruiting a permanent deputy headteacher. One teacher is currently on long-term sickness leave. There has been one new appointment to the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 7–8 November 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The senior leadership has secured the confidence of pupils, staff, parents and carers. All agree that the school is improving strongly. The headteacher and interim deputy headteacher set high expectations and have a clear vision for improving learning and

progress to ensure that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The progress of all pupils is tracked carefully and, when pupils are in danger of falling behind, meetings are held to identify appropriate support and immediate action. Leaders have ensured that teachers' assessments are accurate by providing appropriate training and frequent opportunities to compare samples of work. Progress is improving quickly and most pupils now make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. This is essential to ensure they fill the gaps in their learning as a result of previously weaker teaching. Progress in writing is not as consistently strong. However, the school has recognised this and embarked on a review of how writing is taught, linked to appropriate professional development training. Pupils' own work shows that this is recently having a more positive impact on their progress. Pupils respond positively to the increased opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects, including science and history. This contributes strongly to improving writing across the school. There is a growing culture of reading in the school. Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. Graphic novels are a useful resource to encourage reading, particularly for boys. Leaders have acted quickly to ensure that Year 6 pupils leave the school with the necessary key skills. Assessments indicate that these pupils are on track to achieve above average results in reading, writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make broadly good progress as a result of better systems to identify particular needs and more effective support. Other groups that may be vulnerable to underachievement are tracked carefully. They make progress broadly in line with their peers.

Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching to good effect. There are now many examples of teaching which is securing good and sometimes outstanding progress. Leaders take appropriate action to deal with the small proportion of teaching that is securing no better than satisfactory progress. The systematic and accurate monitoring of teaching and other aspects of provision helpfully provides useful feedback for teachers. However, points for development are not always followed through to the next observation to ensure that matters improve quickly. An extensive programme of training and support is improving teachers' skills and the school has set minimum expectations and detailed guidance on what constitutes a good lesson. Classrooms are consistently well ordered and stimulating. Displays contribute to learning well by providing supportive and helpful reminders, for example of key vocabulary.

In the best lessons, teachers carefully and systematically build on prior learning. The pace of learning is brisk and teachers have high expectations. Good learning behaviours are embedded in positive attitudes to learning and these are evident across the school. Teaching assistants support learning effectively when they are clear about their role. In a small minority of lessons, however, this valuable resource is not used effectively because it is not thoroughly planned. Teaching assistants have received appropriate training to deliver programmes of additional support. They

make a good contribution to learning, for example when they work in small groups to help pupils learn the sounds letters make.

Pupils now have more opportunities to solve mathematical problems and this is embedded in daily plans. In one lesson, older pupils used a range of number skills to successfully solve mathematical word problems. The activities in this lesson were well matched to the various needs in the class and offered appropriate challenge for all pupils. Pupils had a clear understanding of appropriate methods to tackle a problem.

All lessons now give pupils ample opportunities to discuss their ideas and answers with a friend and this is effective in ensuring their full engagement. Lesson aims are routinely shared with pupils to ensure they know what they are about to learn. In some lessons, however, pupils are not told how they will know they have achieved the aims of the lesson. Leaders have advanced plans to introduce success criteria to all lessons.

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They are pleased to have clear targets for improvement linked to their National Curriculum levels in mathematics and English. Targets are reviewed regularly and pupils now know which aspect of their work they need to improve in order to progress. Marking has improved and often provides useful feedback to pupils, particularly in improving their writing. Many pupils take opportunities to respond to marking and some assess their own work accurately. Marking in mathematics is consistently done but is less effective in providing useful next steps for pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the more regular information they receive about the progress their children make as well as the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

The school has appropriately prioritised improving reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have recently begun work to further develop the curriculum. Some subjects are taught within a theme; for example, the whole-school topic of 'London' is taught across several subjects so that pupils can see the links in their learning.

The governing body monitors the work of the school rigorously, including through regular focus groups meetings to check progress against the school's detailed action plans. The parent champions play a valuable part in monitoring the work of the school and communicating this to parents and carers. Safeguarding procedures are secure. The school records important pre-employment checks diligently.

The local authority provides valuable and effective support outlined in the statement of action, which is deemed fit for purpose. School leaders work in close partnership with the local authority and independent advisers, to ensure that support is closely tailored to the emerging needs of the school. The partnership work with advisers has been helpful in improving leadership, teaching and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

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

Michelle Winter

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to at least good so that pupils consistently achieve well, by ensuring that:
 - pupils of all levels of ability are set challenging work so they aim high and achieve well in lessons
 - marking consistently helps all pupils to improve their work, and they have more opportunities to act on teachers' feedback.

- Raise attainment in mathematics and writing by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to talk about, explain and record different ways to solve mathematical problems
 - increasing opportunities for writing at length in all subject areas.