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Mrs Parker
Headteacher
Gladstone Primary School
Gladstone Street
Peterborough
PE1 2BZ

Dear Mrs Parker

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Gladstone Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 July 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the members of the governing body and the local authority officer who found time to join in discussions, which I particularly valued.

One teachers is leaving and six others retire at the end of term. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage passes to one of the assistant headteachers at this time. A new part-time temporary deputy headteacher takes up the position in September 2012, pending a re-advertisement of this role.

As a result of the inspection on 24 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 **satisfactory** progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The unvalidated results of the 2012 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments and the Key Stage 2 national tests show noticeable improvements in attainment, although those in writing remain variable. Overall attainment at both Key Stages is likely to remain below the national average.

The educational value-added from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is likely to be positive with many pupils making good progress from a low base. In previous years underachievement in Key Stage 1 related to both weak teaching and inaccurate target setting. There is a clear relationship in the data that links previous underachievement in Key Stage 1 to the good rate of progress being made currently in Key Stage 2, where achievement also improved in 2011.

The local authority's view, that the assessments at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage do not accurately reflect the quality of the provision in that area, is correct; the children's progress is not accurately recorded. HMI noted rapid progress made by the children in the extension phonics group, one of four groups from the three Reception classes. These children's grasp of phonics was strong and two thirds of the group were able to write a simple sentence that included a capital letter and a full stop. Year 1 target setting and planning have predominately been guided by inaccurate assessments at the end of the Early Years Foundations Stage. The initial results of the Year 1 phonic screening test showed that only one third of the pupils reached the expected level. These variables in the data, from Reception to Key Stage 1, raise concern about the transition data available, which is clearly related to the previous underachievement at Key Stage 1.

HMI scrutinised a sample of the pupils' books in each classroom visited and noted that attainment was broadly in line with the grades awarded by the school but not every book reflected the rate of progress given in the school's data base.

HMI asked the school to select six lessons for joint observation with senior staff. Four lessons were good or better, including one that was outstanding. One satisfactory lesson was observed and one was inadequate. HMI provided all staff with professional feed back on how the lesson might have been more effective. The school's self-evaluation judges teaching as satisfactory and HMI concurs with this robust appraisal.

Senior staff joined HMI in a round table discussion of the quality of teaching and the views they expressed matched the judgements given by the inspector. In the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage lesson, mentioned earlier in this letter, the precision of the teacher's explanations and guidance were the key to the rapid progress secured.

In the lessons observed, pupils consistently wrote on unlined paper or white boards and the accuracy of letter and word placement was inconsistent because of this lack of guide lines. The ease with which the pupils were able to read their own work was also undermined by this problem. Where teaching required improvement or was inadequate, the pace and challenge provided was inconsistent and the guidance offered by staff lacked clarity.

The pupils' behaviour during this visit was delightful, and the cooperation and respect noted was impressive. Attendance is average and no exclusions have taken place during this school year. The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and staff recruitment procedures are exemplary.

The headteacher has worked very hard to stem the trend of underperformance evident in the last two reports. Each of the areas for improvement given at the last inspection show improvements and some of the progress made has been good. A great deal of work has gone into assessment and this revealed the positive progress

currently being made and the areas requiring further improvement. The headteacher's work load is excessive and the governing body's efforts to appoint a full time deputy headteacher are critical to the school's capacity to progress further.

The local authority's statement of action was judged as fit for purpose by Ofsted and effective support has been provided in school; the authority also provided a consultant headteacher, from Holy Croft Primary School in Keighley whose school serves a similarly area and who is a local leader of education. The school also made effective links with a high performing school in Bradford with a similar catchment area.

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

David Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- In order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment to be broadly in line with national averages by January 2014 the school needs to:
 - set more ambitious targets so that pupils make more than satisfactory progress
 - make better use of assessment information to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve
 - provide more guidance to pupils about what they have done well and what their next steps in learning are, and to give them time to respond to teachers' comments.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that lessons build on what pupils already know and can do, so that they develop learning sequentially and progressively
 - increasing the pace and challenge in lessons by developing teachers' questioning skills
 - making sure that learning activities are tailored more accurately to the individual learning needs all of pupils.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the scope of monitoring activities to include a regular review and evaluation of the quality of learning seen in pupils' books
 - establishing more effective arrangements for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating policies to ensure they are fully up-to-date and comply with current regulations.