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27 September 2012

Mrs Fi McGregor  
The Headteacher  
Stonesfield School  
High Street  
Witney  
OX29 8PU

Dear Mrs McGregor

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Stonesfield School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 26 September 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

Since the previous inspection you have been appointed on a permanent basis and a new deputy headteacher took up her post in September. There has been a number of changes to the teaching staff and governing body. The roll has fallen slightly and there are now 145 pupils in the school.

As a result of the inspection on 17 and 18 January 2012, 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.

Pupils' achievement has improved considerably in the relatively short space of time since the previous inspection. After a significant dip in 2011, the attainment of pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 in 2012 rose markedly, with 88% reaching the expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics compared with 57% the previous year. Considerably more reached the higher Level 5 in reading and mathematics, although not as many did so in writing. These pupils had also made better progress during their years in Key Stage 2 with all of them making expected or better progress in English and almost all in mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils' progress accelerated towards the end of the year and, in some cases, the pupils made as much progress in the summer term as they had during the previous two terms.

Pupils' accelerated progress is the result of better, more consistent, teaching and the introduction of robust systems to check pupils' progress in order to identify potential underachievement at an early stage. Whilst teaching over time has clearly not been effective enough to secure consistently good progress for pupils, this is no longer the case. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was consistently strong and enabled pupils of all abilities to make gains in their knowledge and understanding. Of particular note is the way that teachers are making much better use of more reliable assessment information to plan effectively for the needs of different pupils within their classes. As a result, learning moves at a good pace. It is clear from pupils' books that teachers now have uniformly high expectations of how pupils will present their work. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and manage them consistently in accord with agreed approaches to behaviour management. There are, nevertheless, a few pupils with behavioural difficulties in the school. Whilst no disruption to learning was seen during the inspection, pupils say that this does happen on occasions.

The mathematics curriculum has been improved to provide a clear framework for the progression of pupils of all abilities. For example, a strong focus on calculations, underpinned by a new policy, has paid particular dividends, with teachers often using innovative approaches to engage their pupils. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils acted as 'human digits' to illustrate place value and this really deepened their understanding. As a result, pupils are more confident with numbers and the relationships between the different operations. They can articulate their methods and reasoning with increasing fluency, although this is not yet the case for all pupils. Pupils are not yet routinely using their investigative skills to devise their own solutions throughout the curriculum. Similarly, the school has made a considerable investment in resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and these are generally well used by teachers and pupils. The next step is to embed the use of ICT to support learning in all subjects.

Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs continues to improve under the supervision of the coordinator in this area. The regular monitoring of the progress of all pupils is enabling potential barriers to learning to be picked up at a much earlier stage. Effective support and intervention in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are enabling pupils to catch up quickly. For pupils with identified needs further up the school, intervention is proving effective and progress has improved so that gaps with all pupils nationally are closing. All interventions are monitored closely and their impact evaluated to ensure that they are having the desired effect. Other adults play an important part in this work and support and training has enhanced their effectiveness.

The capacity of leadership within the school has been considerably enhanced by the substantive appointment of the headteacher and the arrival of the deputy headteacher. Moreover, middle leaders are also making a significant contribution to improvements in the school. There is an effective system for monitoring lessons and

the work in pupils' books which is helping to improve teaching. This is allied by increasingly effective use of information to monitor the progress of every pupil at regular intervals throughout the year. This is being used effectively to ensure that all pupils make at least expected progress. Leaders are not yet, however, routinely monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils from their various starting points. The governing body has experienced some upheaval in recent months but is, nevertheless, strengthening its capacity to hold leaders to account and to plan strategically for the future.

The statement of action prepared by the local authority was deemed by Ofsted to meet requirements. The local authority has given the school effective support which has been proportionate to its needs. At a strategic level, appropriate challenge and support have been provided by local authority advisers. Support within school in English and mathematics has been particularly effective in helping teachers to plan effectively for the needs of their pupils and to develop leadership in these subjects.

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

Graham Lee  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012**

- Improve progress, especially in mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching and learning as quickly as possible so this is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - agreed whole-school approaches to behaviour management are consistently followed
  - teachers use assessment information to plan tasks and activities that are suitably challenging for all pupils so that learning moves at a good pace
  - teachers have the highest expectations of how work will be presented
  - teachers use technology better to enhance teaching and learning.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring the mathematics curriculum provides a clear framework for progression and the acquisition of skills for all ability groups
  - embedding the systems for checking all aspects of the school's performance rigorously, especially the progress pupils are making and the effectiveness of teaching
  - ensuring that the governing body plays a strong part in checking pupils' progress, evaluating the impact of the school's action plans, and contributes systematically to planning for the future.
- Sustain recent improvements in the quality of provision and leadership for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so that by July 2012 the gap in their compared with similar pupils nationally has closed by:
  - ensuring that pupils' needs are identified early and accurately so that interventions are matched to their specific requirements
  - ensuring that there is a clear and systematic approach to supporting pupils so their progress improves quickly
  - ensuring that as changes take effect the coordinator for special educational needs has sufficient time to plan and monitor provision and to support staff.