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Judith Lloyd-Williams
Headteacher
Osmaston Primary School
Addison Road
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Dear Miss Lloyd-Williams

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Osmaston Primary School

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and the Chair of the Governing Body gave when I inspected your school on 5 December 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please also convey my thanks to the senior adviser from the local authority who met with me.

The school has undergone some significant changes to both leadership and teaching staff since its last inspection. There has been a change of leadership structure to include two new deputy headteachers and six new class teachers across the school. From September 2012, the school has employed two new behaviour mentors.

As a result of the inspection on 20 March 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 satisfactory progress overall in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement. It has made good progress towards improving pupils' progress in writing.

The issues arising from the merger of the two schools and the time required to address these have slowed down the progress the school has made. The school is ably led by a very motivated and focused headteacher, who has maintained strong leadership throughout this transitional phase of the school. She is now beginning to build a supportive team around her, with a similar vision for turning the school around, although it is too early to assess their impact. The governing body is also determined to help improve the school and ensure that pupils are at the heart of what they do. It acknowledges that, currently, there is not sufficient expertise and capacity within the governing body to be totally effective in its role of checking the school's progress. Governors are still heavily reliant on information provided to them

by senior leaders, and are not directly checking the views of the school's pupils, parents or staff.

When the school went into a category of concern in March 2012, this followed a turbulent time with both the infant and junior schools giving causes for concern. However, during 2012, the school has done much to improve and set the foundations for the future. Of significance is the school tackling poor attendance and improving pupils' behaviour, which needed to be addressed before the school could improve learning. As a result of taking effective measures, attendance is now around the national average and pupils' behaviour is no longer a barrier to learning. Pupils who find it difficult to behave well are effectively supported by a wide staff team who communicate with each other regularly. The Every Child Matters Manager continues to work with the families of children who are at risk of underachievement. Due to the school's rising roll, which includes an increasing number of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and who speak English as an additional language, the school has had to adapt its original plans to make additional provision for these children. As a result, the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. It has given an accurate evaluation of itself and can demonstrate priorities are being tackled urgently and are leading to improvement in all aspects of the school's work and ultimately to outcomes for pupils.

Data is showing a more consistent pattern of progress across the school, which has improved now that most of the inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Whilst the percentage of good teaching is improving, there is still too much teaching which is not yet good. School leaders continue to check on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement and progress. They know the importance of having accurate assessment data for each child and for every class, and this is developing well. Data still reflects some variation across year groups, but this is being addressed. The early signs for this academic year are that progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, and that progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 requires improvement but is improving, with stronger progress in writing. This is due to pupils showing a greater keenness to write, more confidence with spelling and opportunities to discuss and plan their writing more effectively. As children start at the school behind their peers in other schools, progress must be better than this in order for them to catch up and achieve what is nationally expected for their age. The school realises that the under-developed speaking skills of pupils, including for those pupils in the early stages of learning English, still has a significant impact on their success in their writing. Staff continue to work hard to develop these skills in pupils and to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged. The legacy of underachievement has been reduced, but has yet to be overcome.

The monitoring of teaching and planning indicates that the pace of lessons has improved. However, in some classes, teachers are so intent on getting through as much as they can during the lesson that they are not using what they know about pupils to adjust the pace where needed. Staff have not always thought enough about the vocabulary they are using and its suitability. They sometimes introduce

too many new words and ideas in a short period of time, leading to confusion and leaving pupils struggling to explain what they mean. Sometimes, what the teacher is saying has not been digested by all pupils. This indicates that staff are not yet effectively assessing pupils' progress throughout the lesson, and are not all confident enough to speed up or slow down the pace of the lesson according to the current needs of the class.

There are always objectives given at the beginnings of lessons, but these are not always precise enough to make clear what pupils need to have achieved by the end of the lesson. Sometimes, pupils are presented with too many success criteria which are not always referred to at the end of lessons or in the marking of pupils' work, and so pupils are unclear whether or not they have done well enough. Teachers are not adapting activities sufficiently to account for the range of learning needs in the class and they do not always make the best use of all of the adults available.

In the best lessons, expectations are different for each group and some pupils are allowed to start their work independently whilst some of the others receive more teaching input tailored to their needs. Teachers' questions in these lessons are well crafted to challenge pupils' thinking. This remains too variable across the school.

Teachers' marking is regular and detailed. However, some pupils with low reading skills are given too much feedback to digest. Staff are generally still not giving enough time for pupils to respond to their comments and to correct their work. Staff new to the school have brought in a range of skills and expertise. They are beginning to share good practice more widely, but this is at an early stage.

The local authority's original statement of action was judged by Ofsted not to be fit for purpose. A second action plan was submitted to Ofsted which was judged to meet requirements. The local authority has done all that it committed to in its action plan, although the timescales set for the removal from a notice to improve were unrealistic given the school's circumstances and recent merger. Accordingly, the local authority is therefore currently reviewing and updating the action plan in the light of the school's progress towards its targets so far. The local authority has provided a variety of support to the school which has been beneficial, although this has yet to secure consistently good teaching or the good progress of every pupil.

Consultants provided by the local authority have strengthened the wider leadership team. There is improvement in the quality of literacy across the school. This is particularly noticeable in the improved quality of teaching of the sounds that letters make, improved presentation and the take up of a handwriting scheme, and the more varied opportunities to write at length in literacy lessons and across other subjects. The local authority has expressed confidence in the leadership at the school and is therefore providing a leader from another school to support teaching and learning as a priority. It has pledged to continue to help strengthen the governing body by providing the school with additional and experienced governors. It also recognises the need to develop and support existing members to enable them to increase their effectiveness in checking the school's progress specifically against

the priorities for improvement. Whilst the school has accessed training it needs from a variety of sources, including the local authority, the governing body has not used all of the governor support services that are available to it.

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

Jane Melbourne
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
 - increasing opportunities for writing in literacy lessons and in other subjects
 - giving pupils time to think and talk before writing
 - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting
 - choosing texts that are always at the right level for pupils so they can learn new vocabulary, understand different ways of writing, and develop a clearer sense of audience and purpose.

- Increase the pace of learning in lessons to eradicate inadequate teaching and achieve consistently good teaching by ensuring that:
 - learning objectives, and intended learning outcomes are always clear and explained to pupils
 - assessment information is used more effectively in planning to ensure that reading, writing and mathematical activities are sufficiently challenging for all pupils
 - teachers adjust work in the light of pupils' responses so that good progress is maintained
 - teachers' marking gives all pupils clearer guidance on how to improve their work, and pupils are given time to read and respond to it.