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Mrs P McSorley
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Dear Mrs McSorley

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH A NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Tim Bristow HMI and I inspected your school on 15 November 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please also pass on our particular thanks to those pupils who met with us and to your chair of governors for the time he gave.

As a result of the inspection on 16 and 17 May 2006, the school was asked to look urgently at four matters: ensuring that leadership and management focus on driving up standards through effective strategic planning; ensuring that assessment data was used effectively to monitor the school's performance at every level; improving teaching so that all pupils were fully challenged; and, ensuring that the required fire safety notices were clearly displayed and a rigorous risk assessment was carried out.

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.

There is now a stronger leadership and management focus on driving up standards. The closer monitoring of teaching and learning is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Although a strategic plan has yet to be formulated, important steps are being taken to have this in place in the spring term 2007. A training day in early January 2007 has been allocated for all governors and staff to jointly discuss the school's strategic priorities. A number of new governors have been appointed, including a new and very experienced chair who has a clear understanding about effective governance and the school's future development. There is greater and more effective

communication with parents. The new governors are to receive training to help them fulfil their role effectively, particularly in holding the school to account for standards achieved. The current annual school improvement plan identifies suitable priorities and actions to bring about the required improvements. These are not, however, embedded in a strategic plan which identifies rigorous systems for evaluation so that pupils' progress is sustained over the longer term.

Since September 2006, a more robust system to track pupils' progress has been used by all teachers to identify pockets of underachievement more accurately. The school can demonstrate how action taken in the light of analysing its assessment data is enabling pupils to make better progress because of targeted teaching. This is evident in the quality of pupils' writing, particularly in Year 6.

There is a regular timetable for assessment procedures. Subject leaders now monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work to get a better view about the consistency of challenge across the school. Findings are shared and recommendations for improvement are agreed in full staff meetings. Teachers make good use of the information from optional tests and other assessments to provide pupils with more challenging work. Year 6 pupils could explain how well they are doing and what they hope to achieve in the national tests next summer. This is a distinct change from their experiences last year.

The school has ensured that all classrooms and exits display the required fire action signs. A rigorous risk assessment has been carried out with support from the local authority (LA) and governors have agreed to install fencing to ensure pupils' safety.

The school has received good support from the LA. Its statement of action is clear and detailed. It appraises all options and makes pragmatic and well reasoned decisions about how to best support the school. The actions taken so far have fitted in well with the school's own actions and have struck the right balance between support and challenge.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector