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Mrs J Slack  
The Headteacher  
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22 February 2007

Dear Mrs Slack

#### OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 February 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. As a result of the inspection on 14 July 2006 the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 so that the needs of pupils are effectively met
- improve the accuracy and use of assessment so that work is matched to pupils' needs and progress is carefully measured
- ensure that curriculum planning enables skills to be built on progressively, especially in writing in different subjects.

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.

The school has rightly focused on improving learning and teaching and has made satisfactory progress in this area. Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant turnover of staff and there are now four new teachers with a class responsibility. Steps have been taken to reduce the number of temporary staff. However, the recruitment of well qualified and appropriately experienced teachers is proving difficult. The monitoring of teaching is robust with effective action taken to eliminate the inadequate teaching.

Some inadequate lessons were observed during the monitoring visit. Pupils were given insufficient opportunities to write for sustained periods. Additionally, teachers' subject knowledge was not sufficient to enable the

pupils to move quickly through the curriculum or build upon prior knowledge and learning. Consequently, teachers' expectations of what pupils can attain are too low to make up for pupils' prior underachievement.

All teachers regularly have their lessons observed with useful feedback provided giving strengths and areas for further development. School staff have provided useful support along with local authority consultants to help those teachers who need to improve. Governors have begun to make regular focused monitoring visits to evaluate the pupils' progress as seen in their workbooks and in observing teachers teaching. However, there is still some way to go before teaching can be described as better than broadly satisfactory.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the degree of challenge for pupils in lessons through a well structured monitoring of weekly planning. There are now activities planned for three levels of ability with clear criteria for how the pupils' work will be assessed. The teachers have a growing understanding of how well pupils are moving on in English, mathematics and science because of the detailed tracking of pupils' progress overtime. Regular checks are made on how individuals, as well as groups of pupils, are doing. Teachers are less adept at using this information to plan the next small steps in pupils' learning on a daily basis. The headteacher has set an expectation of how much progress each child should make from the beginning of the year. This information is used to set targets for pupils. Pupils in English generally know these targets. However, the method used to enable pupils to fully understand these targets is inconsistent across the school.

There have been improvements in how writing is taught in subjects outside English, but less progress has been made in compiling a writing skills ladder so that teachers are accurately able to assess the pupils' writing ability and provide suitably challenging work. The school has identified where the various types of writing are taught in different subjects. However, this has resulted in reduced opportunities for pupils to build up the required skills systematically. Consequently, the school still has some way to go in raising the pupils' attainment and progress in writing. There is still a steep hill to climb if the pupils are to meet their targets by the end of the year.

Following a review, the school has in place a curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Next it plans to realign the curriculum so that it builds more effectively on the skills taught lower down the school, particularly to incorporate developments in writing across the different subjects. This is a longer term plan with the school concentrating on improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve the pupils' achievement.

The school is currently following the local authority action plan to bring about improvements but would benefit from being supported to develop their own tightly focused plan in order for the progress made so far to be sustained.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth  
Her Majesty's Inspector