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Mr C J Watts
The Headteacher
Northern Parade Junior School
Doyle Avenue
Portsmouth
PO2 9NE

Dear Mr Watts

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 13 December 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my appreciation to everyone who gave their time to speak to me about their work in school and provided documentation.

As a result of the inspection on 14 June 2006, the school was asked to sharpen the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress so that teachers could identify underachievement and take appropriate action. The second issue stated that pupils should be given enough time to produce more work independently.

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.

The school has made considerable efforts to improve the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. Effective systems have been implemented which are having a positive impact on achievement. These are clear and easy to use, which has enabled all staff to put them into operation consistently. Teachers are now able to identify, without difficulty, any pupils who are in danger of underachieving and to take action to support them. Individual education plans have been re-written for pupils who have learning difficulties and these are used effectively to support learning in the classroom. Targets are clearly displayed in classrooms. The vast majority of pupils know what they are expected to achieve and are able to discuss their own progress, knowing quite clearly what they must do in order to reach the next level of attainment.

The school has responded particularly well to the issue of pupils' independent working. Subject leaders monitor the planning in their areas and this has successfully raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve. During lessons, teacher-led sessions are shorter and more emphasis is given to paired and group discussion work. Pupils were observed giving astute feedback on each other's work. A good mathematics lesson enabled pupils to think and reason mathematically with only occasional support from the teacher. Another lesson, packed with a variety of activities, made sure that all pupils achieved as well as they could. Some pupils had their progress recorded on camera to aid independence. This reminded them of what they had done when it came to completing their instructional writing task. These considerable improvements impact well on the progress pupils make.

Support provided by the Local Authority (LA) is effective. They have increased the amount of time which the link adviser spends in school and have arranged for a colleague headteacher to support the leadership and management of Northern Parade. The LA has used its powers to appoint extra governors to the school. It is confident that the leadership of the school can deliver the necessary improvements.

Overall, the school realises that there is still work to do, but it has made a good start to tackling the issues from the previous inspection. This initial success is a firm foundation on which to build further.

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

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Additional Inspector