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Mr L P Sluman  
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25 January 2007

Dear Mr Sluman

#### 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 18 January 2007, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I appreciate the warm welcome I received from both staff and pupils. Also, please pass on my thanks to the adviser from the local authority (LA) and the chair of governors who found time to meet with me and discuss the work of the school.

As a result of the inspection on 5 July 2006, the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 so that the needs of pupils in these years are effectively met
- improve the accuracy and use of assessment in these years so that work is matched to pupils' needs and progress is carefully measured
- strengthen leadership and management so that improvement in these years is secure.

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.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum in the class for pupils in the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory. As a result, pupils are making expected progress, although standards by the end of Year 2 are still low in reading, writing and mathematics due to the previous history of weak teaching. The teacher currently in post has high expectations and has created a positive climate for learning. Behaviour is managed effectively and pupils have good work habits and follow orderly classroom routines. Pupils report they are happy at school and enjoy their work. Links with parents have also

been improved through sending home a weekly class newsletter explaining what pupils are learning. Marking of pupils' work sometimes lacks focus, for example in helping them to improve their writing. Curriculum planning is secure and work is pitched at the right level to meet the needs of pupils in each year group. However, activities for the Reception children do not always afford them sufficient opportunity for exploration and for developing their own ideas. The school is aware of this area for further development and is working closely with the LA advisor to extend planning.

The school has improved the accuracy and use of assessment information and work is matched more closely to pupils' needs. The class teacher uses targets to inform lesson planning and pupils are aware of areas they need to work on to improve. Careful recording of the early learning of Reception children provides a secure starting point for measuring future progress. The use of data to check pupils' progress as they move up the school is underdeveloped and this is recognised by the school and LA as a priority for further improvement.

The leadership and management for the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class have improved. The headteacher, governors and LA have successfully resolved a staffing issue which was outstanding at the time of the last inspection; the conclusion of which has helped to ensure stable and consistent teaching for pupils. A new class teacher has been appointed since the time of the last inspection and the headteacher also provides direct support by teaching the class for part of the week. Throughout a period of uncertainty for the school, a high level of staff morale has been maintained. The headteacher conducts lesson observations to assess the quality of teaching. However, these are insufficiently focused on aspects of teaching and learning which might raise pupils' achievement. Training is planned for senior leaders in this area of the school's work.

There has been a satisfactory level of support from the local authority. It has acted to secure training and advice for staff, particularly to improve provision in the class for Reception children and to raise standards in numeracy and literacy. The LA has provided advice and support to the school in their management of a sensitive staffing issue. The LA has also worked with the governing body to help strengthen its role in monitoring the work of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath  
Her Majesty's Inspector