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30 March 2007

Mr R Marsh
The Headteacher
Stoke Damerel Primary School
Collingwood Road
Stoke
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Dear Mr Marsh

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 March 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 25 and 26 January 2006, the school was asked to: improve the rigour of systems to manage staff performance and effectiveness; improve the teaching of calculation and problem solving skills in mathematics and investigation skills in science for pupils in the junior classes, to accelerate the progress they make in these subjects; and, improve the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and ensure all staff are fully involved in this process.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress on these issues. The headteacher has provided effective leadership and management to ensure that all of the areas for improvement are being addressed robustly.

The staffing structure has been systematically reorganised. Members of the strong senior team have roles which enable them to use their expertise and skills. Teachers work closely in teams and reflect together on ways of promoting effective learning. Significant measures have been implemented. Less effective teaching has been robustly addressed and the proportion of good teaching increased. The pupils' progress is tracked systematically. Team leaders carefully evaluate the impact of school improvement initiatives on

teaching. They are more precise in identifying development needs and lead the training and support which will best secure improvement. For example, they have provided effective coaching and mentoring to teachers to give them a greater understanding of how to use assessment to diagnose weaknesses in learning. Assessment processes have been sharpened and a large group of pupils who were at risk of failing to reach the levels expected for their age has been identified and their needs established. Individual pupils' needs are being met through a range of good quality intervention programmes. These pupils are now making good progress.

Good progress has been made in making teaching in mathematics more focused on investigative work. Joint planning of lessons, led by team leaders, is enabling staff to tailor teaching and classroom organisation more closely to all pupils' needs. The use of information and communication technology to illustrate concepts and strategies visually for pupils has improved. Pupils are being taught specific calculation strategies well and use efficient written methods when tackling problems requiring a sequence of operations. They are more directly involved in, and confident about, their own learning. They get regular feedback about their work and know the targets they must reach to improve further. In science, pupils have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding through enquiry based work. Consequently, the rate of progress for learners of all abilities has accelerated.

Good progress has been made in developing the quality of school's analysis of its effectiveness. Teachers, pupils, parents and governors are now more involved in the school's self-evaluation processes. The headteacher has developed a culture of shared reflection. Teachers are given regular opportunities within their teams to think about how well the school is doing and contribute to plans for improvement. Improvements to the system for monitoring pupils' progress have enabled all staff to work in a sharply focused way to meet individuals' needs. Senior leaders have evaluated the impact of new initiatives carefully. The school now has a more precise picture of its own strengths and weaknesses, as indicated by its more accurate school self-evaluation form (SEF).

The school is aware of the need to continue evaluating the impact of these improvements to its provision on the outcomes for learners, especially as more time is needed to see their full effect on the pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

David Townsend
Her Majesty's Inspector