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Mr A Priest
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Priest

Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 June 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 24 May 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English, particularly in writing and by the more able pupils
- strengthen the role of the headteacher in ensuring rigorous, focused and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning
- establish better systems for recording and using performance data in order to track and respond to the progress of pupils and groups
- extend the outdoor provision for children in Reception.

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 and in raising the pupils' achievements.

The preliminary results of the Key Stage 1 national tests for English in 2007 are encouraging. In reading and writing, a good proportion of pupils are working comfortably within the levels expected for their age. In reading, around half of the pupils in Year 2 reached the higher level possible for their age. In Key Stage 2, whilst test results in English are not available yet, the school's assessment data indicates that most pupils are making satisfactory progress and that standards are likely to be broadly average. This is because the school has taken sound steps in addressing the

needs of pupils at risk of failing to reach expected levels in writing. It has now analysed pupils' work, identified which classes and learners need additional help, and put support teaching in place. Teachers plan and teach writing with a suitable emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. The features of different writing styles are modelled well. Whilst some literacy planning focuses carefully on how to challenge and assess each ability group, this is not consistently the case. Writing results indicate that some more able writers in Year 2 and Year 6 are not making the progress of which they are capable.

The headteacher has made sound progress in putting in place a systematic, rigorous and focused process for monitoring teaching and learning. It is now closely linked to arrangements for performance management. Formal lesson observations are undertaken at regular intervals. Teachers are given clear written feedback about the strengths and areas to improve in their practice. The development points are the focus of subsequent observations, enabling teachers to review the new methods they have introduced. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet focused on particular initiatives and the needs of specific groups, such as the more able pupils, with precision. Checks on lessons are not used alongside the analysis of teachers' planning and work in pupils' books as a means of evaluating how well strategies to promote better achievement are working.

Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed its approaches to monitoring pupils' academic performance over time. Teachers are now formally assessing pupils' reading skills and mathematics knowledge each term and writing is assessed each half term. The headteacher has collated results and is now able to identify and report to governors on standards more readily. The governing body uses this information to help it ask pertinent questions about how well pupils are doing. In writing, a more detailed analysis has been undertaken of the progress specific groups of pupils make and the reasons why some learners might be underachieving. This has enabled it to target extra support strategically. The headteacher has begun recording performance data electronically so that it can track each individual pupil's progress across the year. However, this process is in its infancy. The school does not yet have a full picture of pupils' achievement over time relative to their starting points and capabilities. This impedes the early identification of pupils at risk of falling behind.

The outdoor provision for Reception children has been markedly improved. Teachers have audited outdoor provision well in terms of the learning opportunities this area might offer and the wider experiences to be had in the school grounds, village and surrounding area. There is now adequate storage, shelter, security and space so that children are now readily learning through play in this area. The area is well equipped with construction kits, sand and water trays and resources for themed exploration. Lesson planning indicates that an imaginative range of thematic role play is offered in the outside space. For example, children are currently choosing a range of seaside themed activities from making passports to booking their holidays at the travel agents and building sandcastles!

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

Yours sincerely

David Townsend
Her Majesty's Inspector