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Mrs D Dalton
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dalton

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 24 April 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am grateful for the contributions of your local authority inspector and the vice chair of governors. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils for the clear and confident way in which they engaged in discussions with me.

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 11 and 12 October 2006, the school was asked: to improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science; to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of by increasing the pace of learning and ensuring that work is matched to learners' needs; and, to refine the existing tracking system so that the progress the pupils are expected to make is clearly identified and staff become more accountable for this.

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. In particular, accountability for pupils' progress is now at the heart of the school's practice. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is now tracked very carefully through regular assessments, and clear systems are in place for recording and analysing those assessments. Teachers and teaching assistants are required to account for unusual variations in the progress of pupils, particularly where progress is slower than expected. As a result, teachers plan literacy and numeracy lessons well to help pupils develop their skills. The school's rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching and learning shows that the proportion of good or better lessons has risen sharply from less than a third at the time of the last

inspection to over a half now. My visits to lessons confirmed this bright picture. The results of the school's monitoring are shared openly with staff so that they recognise how to improve and where they can go to see good practice. Spurred on by your vision and skilful management, the staff have become a highly cohesive team with a real determination to improve. As a consequence, the ethos of the school has been transformed. Pupils are focused on their learning in lessons. The poor behaviour responsible for undermining achievement in the past was much improved by the time of the last inspection and has now largely been eradicated.

Pupils are now given clear targets for the development of specific skills in English and mathematics. These have been successful in raising teachers' expectations and helping pupils to understand the purpose of lessons and activities. The pace of learning and the match of work to pupils' capabilities are markedly better in English and mathematics, where expectations are clearly understood, than in other subjects. Teachers' marking often refers to pupils' targets and, as a result, has become much sharper and more informative, helping pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The school recognises that its target setting might be refined further to allow pupils to move on more quickly when a skill has been achieved.

All aspects of pupils' literacy have shown good improvement. Pupils speak confidently and most listen carefully. Although writing standards remain below average overall, pupils have developed confidence in writing at length and in a variety of forms. They are encouraged to read widely across a variety of texts. Improvement in pupils' rate of progress in mathematics is satisfactory, although pupils still lack confidence in their understanding of some concepts by Year 6 as a result of past underachievement. Standards in science remain low across the school. Investigative approaches in science are underdeveloped and pupils do not apply number and measurement sufficiently to secure the accuracy of their work. In other subjects too, opportunities to apply and develop writing and number skills are not taken and work too often requires limited responses from pupils.

The school has received good support from its local authority. The local authority's original statement of action lacked detail and measurable success criteria. However, its subsequent planning fits coherently with the school's own very detailed action plan. Monitoring by the local authority link inspector and consultant team has been regular and thorough and has provided a detailed and realistic appraisal of progress. The support provided by local authority subject consultants has been effective in improving pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Consultant support for science is planned to commence in the summer term but, as yet, there has been limited progress in raising standards in this subject.

The school has worked hard to establish a good climate for learning. The challenge now is to ensure that the good practice established in supporting pupils' progress in English and mathematics is spread to raise standards in all areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Hodgkinson
Additional Inspector