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Mrs D Lucas  
The Headteacher  
Short Heath Junior School  
Pennine Way  
Willenhall  
West Midlands  
WV12 4DS

Dear Mrs Lucas

#### 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 26 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. May I also pass on my thanks to your colleagues for their time and, in particular, the children for their contribution to the 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 11 and 12 December 2006, the school was asked to:

- improve standards and progress in writing, mathematics and science
- monitor teaching and learning more rigorously to improve the pace of learning
- develop the role of subject leaders.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in improving the areas for consideration. However, progress is variable and there is scope for greater rigour in the monitoring of the school's performance and in improving the contribution and role of subject leaders. Some of this delay is as a result of staffing changes that are planned to take place in September 2007. Although some progress has been made to improve the rigour of monitoring, there is a danger that this aspect could be judged inadequate in any future inspection.

The school has made changes following the findings of the last inspection. For example, the way the school tracks pupils' progress is much improved. The level of monitoring has increased, although some of this is too informal and, as a

consequence, the outcomes of the monitoring are not always acted upon sharply enough.

The improved monitoring of pupils' progress shows that standards in English are expected to rise in 2007 to around 75% achieving national expectations, with around a quarter achieving the higher levels. There is less confidence about standards in mathematics which are likely to remain at about the same levels as 2006. However, the school is hopeful that around 80% will achieve the expected levels in science although a lack of detailed analysis prevents the school from being secure in their expectations.

Aspects that show improvement are problem solving tasks in mathematics and science and basic number skills. More accurate sentence construction is also evident. The presentation of work, however, is poor and standards of spelling are low. Pupils use a limited vocabulary, both in written work and when speaking.

The quality of teaching is improving and there are good relationships between pupils and teachers. Good questioning provides greater challenge to pupils and the pace of lessons has improved. Activities are generally matched to pupils' needs and teachers are more frequently checking pupils' progress. Marking has also improved and is closely linked to learning objectives. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary by limiting their opportunities to speak at length and not developing literacy skills in other subject areas.

Pupils say that they like school and the school council acknowledges the improvements being made. Behaviour is good inside lessons and satisfactory outside. The pupils especially appreciate the increasing additional activities that enliven their curriculum, although they say that they would appreciate more.

Subject leaders have been provided with additional training and professional development opportunities, including analysing work samples alongside external consultants. Some subject leaders make effective use of data about the pupils' progress and identify those who need extra support. They have started to draft plans for improving their subjects for the next year but not all have had time to monitor standards of teaching in their subject areas. Progress in developing their role is satisfactory, but some inexperienced subject leaders are due to take up posts in September. Reports to governors about the improvements to standards and the quality of teaching could be more detailed and used to set future targets.

The support provided by Education Walsall is good and has been closely matched to the areas that require improvement. The work of the consultants is especially valued by the school and paired work in classrooms has been particularly effective.

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

Yours sincerely

**Ceri Morgan**

Ceri Morgan  
Her Majesty's Inspector