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06 December 2007

Mrs Della Williams  
The Headteacher  
South Norwood Primary School  
34 Crowther Road  
South Norwood  
London  
SE25 5QP

Dear Mrs Williams

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my particular thanks to those children and staff who met with me, to the Chair of Governors and to the advisors from the Local Authority (LA) for the time they gave.

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 in March 2007, the school was asked to: raise standards and achievement in literacy and numeracy by ensuring teachers consistently plan work well matched to all pupils' needs; use marking to give pupils clear guidance; develop the role of subject coordinators; and improve attendance and punctuality.

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' achievement.

Inadequate teaching in the past and low expectations resulted in exceptionally low standards achieved earlier this year. Since then major changes have taken place including seven new members of staff taking up posts at the beginning of this term.

The headteacher has worked hard to reverse a long term decline in all aspects of school life. Much improved planning and assessment systems are now in place and these are resulting in more consistent lesson planning. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives, key questions and work which better meets the differing needs of pupils. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills and to engage in practical activities. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in classes

and in 'catch up' sessions. Classrooms are well ordered, attractive learning environments and there are good opportunities for pupils to celebrate their achievements. Feedback to pupils is improving with the use of sharper lesson objectives and better use of questioning and plenary sessions. However, there is still a small amount of teaching which is inadequate and too much that is satisfactory. This means that although the rate of progress made by pupils is improving it is still too slow to enable them to make up lost ground. In many classes expectations of what all children, particularly the more able, can achieve are too low and the pace of learning too slow.

Good systems are now in place to gather accurate assessment information, track pupils' progress and set targets for achievement. This tracking highlights clearly the mountain the school has to climb. However it also demonstrates that strategies for improvement that are implemented vigorously across the whole school are effective as evidenced in the improving picture in reading. All staff now have a better understanding of National Curriculum levels and age related expectations. Up till now short term milestones in the school action plan have focused on improving systems and provision. A shift of emphasis is now required as these short term targets are not sharply enough focused on learning and pupils' progress.

Leadership is becoming stronger at all levels. This includes the governing body which with a new chair, vice chair and clerk are becoming well informed, more involved and better trained thus enabling them to carry out their responsibilities more effectively. One of the key changes which is driving improvement is the development of the roles, responsibilities and impact of English and mathematics subject leaders. Both leaders have a clear understanding of the challenges and strategies for improvement required. Raising standards in mathematics is currently the most urgent focus and the subject leader, with good support from an LA consultant, has analysed assessment information and monitored teaching, pupils' work and planning to pinpoint areas where most improvement is needed.

Attendance has continued to improve and last academic year the overall figure was broadly average. There are good systems in place to encourage all children to attend well and to come to school on time.

The LA is providing well targeted support which has contributed to improved quality of provision in the Foundation Stage and increasing knowledge and confidence of Literacy and numeracy subject leaders. The LA is carrying out its monitoring and evaluation role well and providing good support and useful feedback to the headteacher and governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald  
Her Majesty's Inspector