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Mrs J Southern  
The Headteacher  
Hook Junior School  
Church View  
Hook  
RG27 9NR

Dear Mrs Southern

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 20 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please convey my thanks to the school council, the staff, the governors and the local authority manager who provided me with valuable information about the school's work. I particularly enjoyed talking to the pupils. They were polite, good-humoured and behaved very well. Many spoke positively about the school and are clearly fond of their teachers.

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 improve leadership and management, in particular the quality of self-evaluation and strategic planning, improve partnerships and communications between all stakeholders, lift the quality of teaching through better assessment and ensure the effectiveness of middle managers. Since the inspection there have been substantial staff changes.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Results in the 2007 tests at the end of Year 6 showed a dip on the previous year although standards in English, mathematics and science were above average. Pupils' progress has been too variable in the past due to inconsistencies in teaching and assessment. The inspector found that the quality of teaching has improved and all lessons seen were at least satisfactory. The deputy headteacher has taken a lead in developing useful assessment strategies. However, there remain inconsistencies in how teachers use the information. Lessons are well organised and pupils often respond enthusiastically. In the best lessons teachers not only make it clear what the pupils are to learn, but also set demanding targets and give good guidance in their

marking. In some lessons the pace is rather slow and teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment to plan work of sufficient challenge for some pupils, which leads to uneven progress.

Staff changes have hampered progress in improving the role of middle managers. The headteacher and staff want the school to improve and are clear about its strengths and weaknesses. However, lines of delegation and management roles are not defined well enough or firmly established. The staff spoke of their frustration with some aspects of leadership and some are concerned that their skills are not used to best effect. The leadership and staff have yet to develop a shared understanding of effective teamwork. The newly formed senior leadership team has made a satisfactory start in identifying key priorities but needs to act quickly to bring consistency and to raise staff morale. Although the partnership with governors has been strengthened, the leadership team's communication with parents and staff remains a concern. Surveys of parents' views and informal discussions with them show that some small improvements have been made but a majority feel that communication remains ineffective.

The local authority has played a pivotal role in supporting the school and has contributed much to improvements in management systems and the quality of teaching. As a result of its support, the school's self-evaluation is now accurate and the development plan is well focused. Another supportive measure has been the appointment of several new governors. They have a correct understanding of their responsibilities and are committed to rapid improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Sean O'Toole  
Additional Inspector