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Mrs A Reeves
The Headteacher
Warminster Sambourne C of E VC Primary School
Sambourne Road
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Dear Mrs Reeves

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and your pupils gave when I inspected your school on 26 September 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.

There have been considerable changes in staffing. Three new teachers joined the school very recently. The deputy headteacher has returned to work part time. The teacher, who was acting as deputy at the time of inspection, left in May.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 February 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and improve achievement, particularly for the more able pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6
- ensure that the features of the best teaching are seen in all lessons.

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

Standards in the Year 6 national tests rose substantially in 2007. The Year 6 pupils reached the target set for Level 4 and above in English, and exceeded the targets in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard of Level 5 was similar to the previous year in English and mathematics but increased substantially in science. The Year 6 pupils, including the more able, made satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 3.

The school's tracking data shows that the Year 6 pupils made good progress last year in reading and mathematics, and satisfactory progress in writing. Pupils in Year

3 made good progress in reading and writing, and satisfactory progress in mathematics. The Year 5 pupils made satisfactory progress in reading and writing, and good progress in mathematics. There were staffing difficulties in Year 4 last school year which slowed progress for this year group.

Why have standards improved? What has made the difference?

The school worked constructively with local authority advisors to gather evidence about the improvements needed and plan what they should do to make the necessary changes. The spotlight was kept firmly on these very important steps through much improved monitoring and evaluation skills.

The headteacher and subject leaders are carefully tracking pupils' progress. They look hard to see whether any pupils or classes make slower progress and provide extra support if there are concerns. They are gathering evidence to show whether the extra support has made a difference and this means that they can focus on the more effective strategies for raising achievement in the future.

Local authority consultants and the headteacher have observed teaching and learning in the classrooms. Shared observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher during this monitoring visit confirmed that their appraisal of teaching and learning is sound, and that they astutely spot things that could be even better.

There are good features in teaching and a positive ethos for learning. Teachers reinforce attitudes that will help pupils become more effective learners. They have useful strategies for spelling out clearly what pupils should be learning and checking on their progress. The pupils relish opportunities to tell the teacher how well they have been learning, for example through picking red, amber or green traffic lights. 'Three stars and a wish' encourages pupils to think about what they have learnt and what could improve standards.

The hard work last school year got the school well back on track. However, rightly, the senior team has set out sensible improvement tasks for this year, bearing in mind the need to induct new teachers into the school's way of working and to eliminate the remaining pockets of underachievement.

The local authority has provided good support which has helped the school to move forward rapidly and pinpointed useful ways to engage in dialogue with staff. The local authority's reviews of progress are informed by specific milestones of what should have been achieved and by when, and helpfully outline sensible next steps.

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

Yours sincerely

Brenda Cusdin
Her Majesty's Inspector