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Mrs J Aldridge
The Headteacher
Rudyard Kipling Primary School
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Dear Mrs Aldridge

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to your senior team, the local authority and pupils for their help and support.

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 20 and 21 September 2006, the school was asked to:

- improve achievement by ensuring that teachers make more effective use of data to assess standards and progress and to set challenging targets for pupils
- ensure that teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 are more consistent and build upon the good practice evident in the Foundation Stage
- develop governors' role in challenging the school, holding it to account, and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met
- ensure that monitoring arrangements involve all staff, and that the impact of the initiatives to improve standards is evaluated.

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' achievements.

Since the last inspection, the school has opened a children's centre. There has also been a change of headteacher. The new headteacher took up post in September 2007 and quickly gained a clear picture of the school's progress to date. She has a very clear vision about where further improvements are needed and some important changes have already been put in place. The local authority has provided a good

level of support and challenge to the school. The school is now in the second year of a successful intensive support programme which is tightly focused on addressing the identified areas of weakness, and improving standards, achievement and the leadership in English and mathematics.

Teachers are increasingly making effective use of data as new systems become embedded. They regularly set challenging, short-term and medium-term targets for every pupil in English and mathematics. These are reviewed regularly with senior leaders and the English and mathematics leaders. Pupils are better informed about their progress. In some classes, pupils are involved in reviewing their learning and targets. All of these developments are helping to improve achievement.

Consequently, standards are beginning to improve, especially those at the end of Year 2, and in English throughout the school. Notably, the 2007 results in Year 2 showed that girls and some relatively disadvantaged groups of pupils reached higher standards than their counterparts nationally. The school recognises that it still has some way to go to ensure that all pupils make progress that is better than satisfactory. Current priorities rightly focus on improving reading standards further, accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics, and ensuring that boys make even better progress, so as to close the gap between boys' and girls' attainment.

Teaching is now more consistent than it was. There is a higher proportion of good teaching distributed across the school. In most of the lessons seen, pupils were making good progress. Notable strengths in teaching include well planned lessons, which incorporate interesting and practical activities that engage and involve pupils. Good question and answer sessions, and effective use of 'talking partners' and group work, result in a good level of dialogue amongst pupils and with staff. Marking is helpful and informative. In lessons, most teachers provide prompts that help pupils to understand their learning targets and guidance about how they might improve their work. In all of the lessons seen, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning were commendable. Pupils work hard, listen well and are keen to contribute. Relationships with staff and amongst pupils are a particular strength. Pupils are very polite, friendly and responsible. They are keen to talk about their work and about the improvements that have been made to their school.

The statutory requirement to ensure that appropriate checks are made on all staff is now met. Additional training has helped to strengthen governance. Governors are now in a better position to challenge the school because they regularly receive information about standards and progress, and because the chair of governors attends all progress review meetings. The governors' role in evaluating the school's work through visits and formal monitoring activities is still fairly limited. Improving this is an item in the governors' action plan.

Monitoring arrangements have improved well so that the school has a clear picture of the impact of actions taken to improve standards and provision in English and mathematics. Teaching and learning, pupils' finished work and progress towards pupils' individual targets, are monitored closely in these subjects. Teachers receive regular feedback about their teaching, and support and training to improve it. Senior leaders recognise that in the longer term, systems for monitoring provision across all

subjects need to be established, and that it will be necessary to establish a revised staffing structure and provide leadership training to facilitate this.

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

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Taylor
Additional Inspector