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8 February 2008

Mrs Ann Henderson
Headteacher
Farringdon Primary School
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Sunderland
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Dear Mrs Henderson

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and your governors gave when I inspected your school on 7 February 2008, 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 the children who met with me and gave such a positive and confident contribution.

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 June 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards at all key stages to ensure that pupils make better progress;
- improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- develop a better balance of curricular provision across all classes;
- develop the roles and responsibilities of middle and senior managers.

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.

The headteacher's determination to improve the school's provision and raise standards was noted in the inspection in June 2007; it remains a key strength. The school has been successful in raising standards and increasing pupils' progress. The results of national tests show that standards for Year 6 pupils in 2007 rose in all subjects when compared with the previous year. In mathematics, standards are now broadly average but standards in English and science remain significantly below average. The progress of these pupils over Key Stage 2 was good in English and

science and outstanding in mathematics. The 2007 national assessments in Year 2 show that standards rose significantly, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' progress in lessons is now good. This is a result of better quality of teaching and learning, curriculum innovations, and new systems for identifying underachievers and extending the challenge for these pupils.

The headteacher and governors have set a high priority on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Rigorous monitoring of lessons and improvement in teachers' planning and pupils' work have resolved previous weaknesses very effectively. Staff now provide tasks that closely match pupils' different needs. They check that pupils understand what they are expected to do and take their previous learning into account. Staff are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They share this with pupils, who confidently judge their own progress. Teachers have significantly reduced the amount of time they talk in lessons, and they provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. The pace of learning has increased, particularly in group work. In a few lessons, the pace slows in whole-class discussions. Staff produce high quality displays that stimulate pupils' learning, celebrate their achievement and reinforce basic skills.

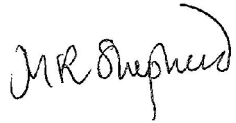
The school has made considerable improvements to the curriculum. It is rich, exciting and motivates pupils. There is good continuity in the programme of work from one year group to the next. Planning across different subjects works well. The mathematics curriculum is well balanced, resulting in faster progress in this subject, and better opportunities for independent writing have resulted in lively and imaginative pieces of work. However, not enough emphasis is given to the technical aspects of writing and to investigative work in science. The indoor curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well balanced but the outdoor curriculum does not cover the areas of learning systematically enough.

A key factor in the good improvements made since the inspection in 2007 is the headteacher's reorganisation of the senior leaders and middle managers. Roles have been clarified and the headteacher's provision of high quality professional development has enabled the great majority of these staff to make outstanding progress in improving their management skills. They confidently monitor teaching and learning and give detailed and well-focused feedback to staff. The organisation of the middle managers as a team works very well; they confidently introduce new initiatives. This shared responsibility is creating much better links between the different key stages. The extension of the senior leadership to include a bursar is also proving effective.

The local authority has aided the school well, in working with the headteacher and governors initially to produce a clear plan for improvement and in subsequently providing good professional support.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MR Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Margaret Shepherd
Additional Inspector