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Mrs Catrina Tilbury
The Headteacher
Nightingale Primary School
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Hackney
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Dear Mrs Tilbury

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 February 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please could you pass my thanks to the staff, children and governors who spoke to me.

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 February 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise achievement in mathematics and science by ensuring that pupils understand key vocabulary and develop their investigative skills;
- make teaching consistently good through rigorous monitoring and support where it is weaker;
- appoint an educational visits coordinator to make sure that risk assessments for trips are in place.

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.

Achievement has risen more in science than in mathematics. In 2007, overall standards rose at Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly for girls. This represented improved achievement during Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, progress improved greatly in science because both boys and girls did better. It improved in English, due to girls' better performance. In mathematics, girls made improved progress but too many boys still underachieved. Since then the school has kept closer records of each pupil's progress in mathematics and provided targeted intervention earlier in Key Stage 2 for those who were falling behind the nationally expected levels. There is frequent discussion of each pupil's progress and pupils new to English receive

support with scientific and mathematical vocabulary. These sharper uses of assessment and intervention have contributed to improved achievement across year groups since September although inconsistencies remain. The use of more experiments and greater teaching time in science, and of weekly problem solving days, has also contributed to improved achievement. Pupils enjoy the increased amount of experimental work in science which has helped them to understand scientific concepts.

In the Foundation Stage, children also develop their mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world soundly through problem solving activities. The 2007 Foundation Stage Profile results show a mixed picture of improvement and decline since 2006, although the absence of moderation hampers direct comparisons. Results reflect the school's focused work that has helped them to improve substantially in using numbers as labels for counting, but remain low for counting and for knowledge and understanding of the world. More recent records show increased tracking of children's progress and that it is rising in these areas, although there are some for whom progress is not as fast as it should be.

Teaching quality has improved although it is not consistently good. In science and mathematics, local authority support, which is provided by The Learning Trust, assisted the subject co-ordinators in introducing new materials and approaches that have raised teaching quality. The new scheme of work for mathematics has supported teachers' lesson planning and teaching across the breadth of the curriculum. In science, more lessons effectively develop pupils' experimental skills and scientific understanding.

The school's evidence shows that teaching throughout the school has improved in terms of using more problem solving activities and more probing questioning to extend pupils' explanation skills. These were evident in lessons and work seen. The working walls and displays attest to the focus on subject-specific vocabulary that was highlighted as an area for improvement at the last inspection.

The school's lesson observations have identified accurately some areas for development for which support has subsequently been given and improvement made. Nevertheless, observations are not focused closely enough on every pupil's progress so are sometimes generous or do not identify the most important points for improving satisfactory teaching to good. Development planning includes setting up a system for frequent observation across years and subjects, and staff have formed teams for peer coaching based on lesson observation. Regular joint observations between the school and The Learning Trust concentrating, on continuous improvement in identified areas, have recently been set in motion, following a lull in observations during the headteacher's absence due to family illness last term. They recognise that improvements in some areas have been either inconsistent or not fast enough. The school has not been clear about the extent of the support from The Learning Trust this year, since it was judged at the last inspection to no longer require significant improvement.

The school has appointed an educational visits co-ordinator. Risk assessments for the large number of school visits are carefully recorded. They place a stronger focus on

the travel risks than other aspects. Pupils are aware of risks involved in visits and how to minimise them. They report that they feel safe.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Close
Her Majesty's Inspector