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Mr I Alexander
The Headteacher
Stratton Primary School
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Dear Mr Alexander

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 May 2008, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I appreciate the welcome shown by both staff and pupils on what was a busy day for the school. Also, please pass on my thanks to the chair of governors and the senior education improvement officer from the local authority who found time to meet with me and discuss the work of the school.

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 23 and 24 October 2007, the school was asked to:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, especially spelling and punctuation, in all subjects in order to improve pupils' standards in writing
- provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding through investigation and experimentation in order to raise standards in science
- make more effective and consistent use of assessment information to set targets and to plan and teach pupils' next steps in learning.

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.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. The school has introduced several strategies which are beginning to raise standards, for example the use of punctuation aids and more helpful marking. There is greater attention to spelling and punctuation in different subjects across the curriculum and attractive displays in classrooms reinforce the acquisition

of literacy skills. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills through stimulating topics which cover more than one subject. A good example is the World War 2 evacuation topic in Year 3 which has culminated in pupils producing some high quality writing in attractive folders. The new developments have not yet had time to demonstrate their full effect on raising pupils' achievement and there is still some inconsistency in standards between classes. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and has improved to include some good features. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they might because of weaker teaching in the past and because there are too few opportunities for them to produce imaginative writing.

The science curriculum contains a broader range of opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate. The school is using the local environment more effectively to conduct experiments and promote scientific enquiry. Pupils enjoy these activities and, as a result, they are working harder and standards have risen. An experienced teacher has recently assumed responsibility for coordinating science and she has good plans for extending the range of activities further and improving resources.

The school has established a thorough system for assessing pupils' learning, setting targets and tracking their progress. Objectives are generally made clear in lessons and pupils are involved in assessing their own progress. There remains some variation between classes in the use of assessment information to plan lessons and occasionally more capable pupils are set work which is not sufficiently challenging.

The headteacher and senior leaders monitor teaching and learning frequently and are aware of areas for further development. They have succeeded in moving the school forward during a difficult period in which there have been several staff changes.

The local authority has provided a good level of support through its school improvement service. Subject advisers, educational consultants and an advanced skills teacher have provided support with curriculum planning, conducted lesson observations, and organised training for staff. Regular monitoring visits have reported on the school's progress in tackling the issues identified for improvement. Staff have found this support very useful.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
Her Majesty's Inspector