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Mr Richard Pickard
The Headteacher
Langland Community School
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Dear Mr Pickard

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 June 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please extend my thanks to the staff and Chair of Governors, for making time to meet with me during the visit, and of course, my thanks go to the pupils.

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 11 and 12 June 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in reading and writing across the school
- use assessment information to ensure that lessons provide work that is more closely matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils, particularly those of higher ability
- improve opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

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 pupils' achievement. Standards in reading and writing are improving well. Senior staff have focused sharply on the progress of individual pupils using more robust and systematic assessments. The school has benefited from the support of local authority (LA) advisers, which helped to identify effective intervention programmes for pupils who were previously underachieving. The school introduced a very successful 'writers' workshop' which stimulated a greater focus on developing writing skills, resulting in pupils gaining confidence in writing more extensively and independently. There is still scope to improve the quality and accuracy of handwriting, spelling and punctuation as these remain inconsistent across year groups. The 'better reading project' has been successful and has identified pupils who were making slow progress to boost their achievement in reading. This has resulted in an increasing

proportion of pupils reaching the reading levels expected for their age. Teaching assistants work well alongside teachers to provide effective support using a more systematic and robust programme for teaching letter sounds. In addition, there are more regular opportunities for pupils to read widely both at home and in lessons.

Senior staff are using assessment more robustly to check how well each pupil is doing and to intervene if progress slows. In the lessons observed for example, the staff used their assessments to provide learning targets for pupils to aim towards. The targets provide clear steps that guide pupils' learning. These have rightly been shared with parents to improve opportunities for them to support pupils' learning at home. The headteacher undertakes more regular and systematic pupil progress meetings, the agenda clearly focusing on achievement and rates of learning. The staff have been trained to prepare for these meetings by producing learning logs, evidence from book trawls and observations of each other's lessons to identify best practice. The deputy headteacher and assistant head undertake weekly checks of teachers' planning and annotate these to provide appropriate guidance. The senior leadership team regularly tracks pupils' performance and monitors planning to check that tasks in lessons are matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Lesson plans include extension tasks for pupils of higher ability, although some of these could be still more challenging.

There have been rapid improvements to the curriculum, providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects and topics. For example, the recent 'Take One Picture' week, effectively used a copy of a famous painting displayed in the National Gallery to enhance pupils' learning using a range of interesting tasks. These included stimulating creative writing and poetry about pirates, ships and sea adventures. Foundation Stage children produced drawings and writing about the seaside, and inspired by the visit of an artist, made wicker boats and seascapes. Linking topics and subjects in this way has helped to make learning practical and relevant. Pupils were fully engaged in investigating combinations of ingredients in a 'pirate meal' during a challenging mathematics lesson. Increasingly, pupils have good opportunities in lessons to read aloud, share their writing with other pupils and to reflect and assess each other's work. Pupils' workbooks and good quality displays around the school show good improvements to the range and quality of reading, writing and practical mathematics. There is still more work to be done to ensure greater consistency in the accuracy of pupils' writing and in the quality and range of problem-solving tasks in mathematics.

The LA is providing good support and governors have been fully briefed about improvements to standards and assessment through regular workshops and seminars presented by subject leaders and senior staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Additional Inspector