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Mrs D Jones  
The Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Jones

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 November 2008, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am particularly grateful to the deputy headteacher, members of the teaching staff, the chair and vice chair of the governing body and the representative of the local authority for the discussions I had with them. Please pass on my thanks to them and to the rest of the staff and the pupils.

Since the last inspection there has been a considerable change in staff, with four teachers taking up appointments at the school in September. The school and governing body have received focused training and support from the local authority over the last year.

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 July 2007, the school was asked to address the following areas for improvement.

- Take account of the views and professional opinions of all stakeholders in drawing together the self-evaluation document; systematically incorporate this into the school's strategic planning, with appropriate emphasis on teaching and learning.
- Extend the arrangements for pupils to talk about their targets, enabling them to participate actively in their learning, monitoring and review.
- Ensure the governing body holds the school to account more rigorously and systematically challenges it to improve further.

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, staff and governors have worked hard since the July 2007 inspection to focus development on the areas for improvement outlined in the report. There is a clear commitment to improve outcomes for the pupils, and systems and results have improved over the last year. The careful induction of new members of the teaching staff has allowed planning, assessment and monitoring systems to be embedded.

The school has developed effective consultation with parents and the views of staff and governors are now a clear feature of the strategic planning process. This improved consultation with parents includes an annual survey which is analysed by senior staff and governors and presented to the full governing body. Issues raised by parents have led to further, more in depth surveys. Recent examples include a survey on the school uniform and the gathering of parental views on the choice of the modern foreign language to be taught in the school. As a result, the pupils now learn Spanish. However, parents do not, as a matter of course, receive the results of the annual survey and the school development plan is not yet refined enough to demonstrate a clear link between the views gained from surveys of parents and consequent action. Staff have formal procedures to provide input into the strategic planning process and, following training from the local authority, governors now take a more prominent role in this process. Pupils provide their views through a school council, members of which outline improvements such as the purchase of new play equipment used at break times. Teaching and learning feature appropriately in strategic planning and recent work on writing demonstrates the impact of this focused approach.

Pupils can generally explain their group targets well and have a good understanding of the systems used in classrooms to track progress. These systems are pupil friendly and attractive and clearly catch the imagination of the children. For young pupils, the 'talking tins', with the targets recorded by pupils themselves, help to reinforce learning. Targets are prominently displayed and pupils make reference to them readily and can discuss what they need to do to achieve the next level in their learning. Individual conferencing each term helps to assess progress against targets set and record each pupil's views and the next steps to be undertaken. Pupils understand and value this process. However, parents do not receive information on the results of the conferencing process unless specifically requested and so are not able to reinforce learning. Pupils' progress towards meeting their targets is very effectively reinforced by the school's marking system. The system is very consistently applied and pupils appreciate the colour coded approach to marking with positive, encouraging comments noted in 'tickled pink' and the next steps for learning written in 'green for growth'.

The governing body has worked to build on the effective training provided by the local authority to strengthen knowledge and understanding of their role in holding the school to account. A particular focus has been the development of the skills required to analyse outcome data and this has improved governors' confidence and ability to challenge performance. The chair and vice chair of governors share a strong commitment to build on improvements made and have led the deeper involvement from individual governors in the work of the school using links with classes and subjects. This is reinforced by a structured programme of visits to classes which are discussed at full governing body meetings. This has been sensitively handled using the opportunity of class visits to gain further information and understanding, establish links with pupils and staff, as well as undertaking a monitoring function. Overall, governors are more empowered and now have the understanding, knowledge and skills to work with senior staff in order to raise achievement and standards.

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 "Robert Pyner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Robert Pyner  
Her Majesty's Inspector