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9 July 2008

Mrs Sally Castle  
The Headteacher  
Ealdham Primary School  
Ealdham Square  
Eltham  
London  
SE9 6BP

Dear Mrs Castle

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 3 July 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass my thanks to the pupils, Chair of Governors and School Improvement Partner.

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 27 and 28 November 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science
- improve the quality of teaching by ensuring activities are planned to match the needs of the pupils closely so that they are always challenged to do their best
- use information gained from monitoring pupils' progress to ensure that pupils have sharply focused individual targets and clear guidance on how to improve their work.

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.

Results from the recent national assessments at the end of Year 2 have improved in reading, writing and mathematics and targets have been met. Significant improvement is evident in the provisional results at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Challenging targets have been exceeded except at the highest level in mathematics. These improvements have been made because specific support and interventions have been successfully targeted in these year groups. For example, additional funding provided by the Accelerating Pupil Progress pilot has been used to strengthen teaching in Year 6. However, the school's own detailed

analysis of its tracking information shows that the progress pupils make as they move through the school is inconsistent and there are pockets of underachievement. Staffing issues have contributed to this but leaders have also accurately identified the need to challenge more pupils consistently to attain the highest levels, for example in Key Stage 1.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching. Typically pupils are told what they will be learning in a lesson and how their success will be measured, although the links between them are not always clear. Lessons consistently include different activities that are planned to meet the varied needs of groups of learners. The quality of these activities varies and they do not always provide the appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils to ensure that they make good progress. Teachers are keen to maintain a brisk pace in lessons. However, sometimes the pace is too fast so pupils are not given the time they need to think about their responses and opportunities are missed for them to comment on each other's ideas. In the best lessons, expectations are high, learning builds effectively on what pupils already know and additional adults are used to support learning well.

Pupils are clear about the National Curriculum levels that they are working at and what they need to do to achieve more because good progress has been made in ensuring that they have sharply focused targets. Pupils speak confidently about the group and individual targets they have for reading, writing and mathematics. One proudly said, 'We know our targets off by heart'. Teachers refer to these targets in lessons and when marking pupils' work. Marking consistently follows the school's revised policy. It identifies what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve further, although the quality of comments for improvement varies. Pupils value the positive comments that teachers make which they say gives them more confidence. Pupils have planned opportunities to consider the comments that teachers make before they begin their next piece of work, for example in writing, which is leading to some improvements in their work.

Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses so have targeted the good range of support provided by the local authority effectively, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6. Appropriate training has also been provided by consultants to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The focus of local authority support will rightly remain on ensuring that lessons consistently challenge pupils so that they achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Jackie Krafft  
Her Majesty's Inspector