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Mr R Hornsby  
The Headteacher  
Adderley Primary School  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mr Hornsby

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 6 November 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to your team, parents and governors for finding time to talk 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.

In June 2008, Adderley governors agreed to a local authority proposal to form a one year collaboration with Somerville Primary, a successful local school. Its headteacher would become the executive headteacher with overarching responsibility for both schools. Nineteen staff, including a new administrative team, were recruited during the summer term and started the school in September 2008. Senior staff now work in both schools. The governing body has been expanded to include a Joint Strategic Partnership group made up of the governors of both schools and now holds the school to account. The acting headteacher of Adderley left the school in July and the collaboration became fully active in September 2008. The improvements noted at this visit are largely the result of half a term's work since then.

As a result of the inspection on 4 and 5 March 2008, the school was asked to look at the following four areas for improvement: raise standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and ensure that all other subjects are covered in sufficient depth; improve the quality and consistency of teaching and ensure staff effectively model language structures to improve pupils' speaking, vocabulary and grammar

skills; improve relationships and communication with parents; and, ensure governors develop clear procedures for holding the school fully to account, improving the retention of staff and reduce the number of supply staff used.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school is now making satisfactory progress.

The school rightly focused its initial efforts on appointing sufficient full-time staff to ensure greater continuity of pupil learning. The close collaboration with Somerville Primary School has strengthened the senior leadership team, with some working in both schools. The headteacher and senior staff have made a huge difference in a short period of time, although they know there is still a lot of work to do. The fifteen-person management team are now more empowered, given autonomy and held to account. Already, since September 2008, all staff have been observed teaching; the assessment system of target setting and tracking pupil progress has been completely revised, and pupils for whom no data existed have been tested; a clear and detailed short-term recovery plan is in place and staff morale is good. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been re-assessed by the school and is judged to be between 25% and 30%, well above national averages. Progress with the issues raised at the last inspection was inadequate up to the end of the summer term but has moved on with alacrity since the formal collaboration began in September 2008.

The school's efforts to raise standards by accelerating pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science did not have time to have an impact on the 2008 test results. The provisional 2008 results indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science have declined from previous years. The main reason for this was the lack of continuity in pupils' learning due to the considerable disruption to teaching, with some classes having as many as seven different supply teachers during the year. However, evidence during this visit from books, a half-term's tracking records and lesson observations indicates that this legacy of underachievement has halted. Pupils are now beginning to catch up and most are making at least satisfactory progress and an increasing number is making good progress. Ambitious individual pupil targets have been set. Some pupils are expected to make twice the progress of that expected nationally. These targets have been shared with parents alongside nationally expected age-related targets. However, current standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, whilst improving quickly, still remain well below national averages. The International Primary Curriculum, in place at the last inspection, has been abandoned in favour of a basic curriculum with science taught as a discrete subject. The curriculum content and delivery are now more consistent between classes.

The school was asked to improve the quality and consistency of teaching by making more effective use of assessment information to ensure work is effectively matched to pupils' capability and ensure staff effectively model language structures to improve pupils' speaking, vocabulary and grammar skills. The outcome of the monitoring of teaching in the first half of the autumn term 2008 has demonstrated

that the overwhelming majority of teachers are delivering at least satisfactory lessons, with just over a third good or better. The visit confirmed that the school's self-assessment of teaching is accurate. The strategy to improve teaching through the modelling and coaching by experienced staff is working. These senior staff with reduced teaching commitments, along with an advanced skills teacher placed by the local authority, are supporting staff well. Staff now plan together in year teams and this has ensured more consistency between classes. Teaching observed in lessons during the visit demonstrated good relationships with pupils. Teachers are using learning objectives and sharing learning intentions with pupils much more consistently. Where teaching is weaker, there remains the inconsistency of questioning strategies and the planning of sufficiently challenging learning opportunities, particularly with the younger children. Teacher planning now shows that more account is taken of assessment information. The revised pupil tracking system is robust, understood and owned by all staff who are now much more aware of the progress that individual pupils are making. More pupils are now targeted for specific support to develop their speaking, vocabulary and grammar skills.

The school has already made considerable strides with improving relationships and communication with parents, taking their views into account and instilling confidence to express their views to senior leaders. For example, a programme of parent-school events has been initiated, and 'Meet the Headteacher' is now a regular event where parents are invited to state their views and challenge the headteacher about any aspect of school life. Parent questionnaires have been sent out every sixth months, and the latest returns show more positive results. For example, the positive response to the question, 'As a parent I feel welcome in the school,' increased from 73% in November 2007 to 88% in July 2008. Parents also report their appreciation for the large number of events organised to celebrate Eid and Ramadan, including a Year 6, staff and governor Iftari party; and a 'mothers only' Eid party attended by 83 mothers. The number of parental complaints to governors has also reduced significantly. Seventy-five complaints were received during 2007/08, and so far there have been none this term. Parents have noted the improvements since September, especially the improved communications, and they acknowledge that their children are now making better progress.

The local authority has provided appropriate support requested by the school and this has been effective. The local authority statement of action is clear and its proposal to form a collaboration with Somerville Primary School has been successful in halting declining standards at Adderley. The support action plan has been negotiated with the executive headteacher. The precise nature of the external support provided by the local authority has been appropriately selected by him to achieve maximum impact, for example the use of an advanced skills teacher to support teaching in identified classes. Historical data and past interventions by the local authority demonstrate that the school remains fragile and the appointment in 2009 of a substantive headteacher will be a key appointment to build on the success of the current interim management.

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 "Clive Kempton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Clive Kempton  
Her Majesty's Inspector