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Mr Havard Spring
Headteacher
Foresters Primary School
Redford Avenue
Wallington
SM6 9DP

Dear Mr Spring

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 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 the pupils, staff and governors for their contribution to the visit.

Although there have been no specific contextual changes, there has been a high staff turnover since the inspection a year ago. In particular, the school's unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, known as the Foresters Opportunity Base (FOB), has had many staff changes. The school now serves a total of 50 pupils who have statements of educational needs; of these, 12 are for pupils who are not part of the FOB. This is over five times the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage accommodation has been improved significantly with the completion of the new, integrated Reception classroom.

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As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 December 2007, the school was asked to:

- improve standards in writing
- develop more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning
- strengthen the role and responsibilities of subject leaders
- embed the new arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and ensure that pupils are clear about their targets.

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.

Provisional results of national tests in 2008 show that academic standards are rising because of the increased rigour in tracking pupils' progress. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage classes, from a well-below-average starting point, because teaching is consistently good. In the rest of the school, progress varies, due to a changing school population, but pupils now make at least satisfactory progress and, in some subjects, good progress.

Standards in the 2008 national assessments at the end of Year 2 were below average, but achievement was good in relation to the pupils' starting points, particularly in reading. The school's focus on writing meant that the percentage of pupils reaching average levels, although below average, rose by 22 percentage points. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science improved but were still below the national average. However, this does represent good progress for these pupils, many of whom had started at the school recently, or had significant learning difficulties. School data show that those pupils who were in the school for the whole of their primary education progressed well, achieved their targets and reached standards broadly in line with expectations for their age.

The carefully recorded and analysed results of optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, compiled by the very effective deputy headteacher, show improved progress in all subjects and higher standards in writing. The use of tracking procedures has improved such that carefully focused and more accurate support is now possible for those pupils who need it. The highly effective teaching assistants make good use of these data and the increased time they have in school. The recent thorough attention paid to reading, and sounds and letters work (phonics) for all pupils, grew directly from the greater rigour in the use of assessment. This focus has ensured that pupils are now making greater progress and achieving well in both reading and writing.

The headteacher had been in post for less than a term at the time of the last inspection. Under his very effective leadership, a very strong sense of teamwork has developed which is now evident throughout the school. One of the key roles of all staff is to follow the headteacher's exemplary lead and relate effectively to all pupils, parents and the local community. In this aim they are very successful. There is a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas that need more development. As one teacher observed, 'We still have a way to go, but now we know we are getting there.'

The local authority has assisted the school in moving forward through carefully targeted support. In particular, advice was sought and used well to enhance the leadership and management roles of senior staff. Carefully increasing the responsibilities of the senior leadership team and subject managers has led to management at all levels now being good, with effective systems to monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. The model of collaborative working to enhance classroom practice is now well established, and the overall quality of teaching has improved significantly as a result. Teaching and learning are

now generally good and sometimes outstanding. The most important improvement is that expectations of pupils' work and behaviour have been raised and agreed. The information gained from assessments is now being used well to provide pupils with individual targets for the next stage in their learning. They now understand these targets and use them well, which is helping to improve standards, particularly in writing. Lessons are very well planned, and ensure that all pupils enjoy learning. Several examples of highly effective practice were seen during the inspection. The use of information and communication technology by pupils from the FOB to create 'Christmas animations' was outstanding, as was the singing from all Key Stage 1 pupils in the hall, led by the exceptional music teacher.

Another example of the strengthening of the senior managers' roles is the further integration of the base and the main school. The head of base has worked closely with the mathematics and English coordinators and the local authority adviser to determine the progression of key skills across all levels of the National Curriculum. The same progression, with extra details, is being used in the main school and this enables the two parts of the school to work even more closely together. A further outcome of this increased responsibility is the school's self-evaluation, which is detailed and accurate. The school development plan, based on individual action plans from coordinators, provides clear guidance for raising standards and the governing body is heavily involved in this planning process. The fulfilment of the building developments, enabled by the outstanding fund-raising powers of the bursar, will see the school taking responsibility for their new Sports Pavilion. This will enable the school to develop further its existing strengths in games and physical education.

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

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Additional Inspector