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Mrs Blowfield  
Headteacher  
Talconeston Primary School  
Norwich Road  
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Dear Mrs Blowfield

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 10 December 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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

- introduce all planned improvements for the Foundation Stage
- maintain the focus on pupils' writing skills, increasing rates of progress and raising standards
- provide more opportunities for potentially high attaining pupils, especially in science
- improve uses of marking, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress to inform lesson plans, thereby meeting individual pupils' needs and accelerating their progress.

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.

Effective leadership by the headteacher has ensured that most of the issues raised in the previous inspection have been resolved. She has prioritised, improvements in the EYFS, increasing the rate of progress and standards in writing and improving teachers' use of marking, assessment and tracking information. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYES) and Key Stage 1 have been reorganised to provide a

Reception and Year 1 class, and a Year 2 class. Two new teachers have joined the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a new classroom and library have been added to the school. Less progress has been made in increasing opportunities for potentially high attaining pupils, mainly because the school has rightly focused its efforts on reorganising EYFS and Key Stage 1 provision and improving pupils' writing. During this period of change, the majority of pupils attained the expected levels by the end of each key stage and overall standards have risen.

The school has made good progress in improving provision in the EYFS which is now satisfactory. Children in Reception and Year 1 learn and play together in a much improved classroom with access to outdoor play areas. Plans are in place to provide new external doors and an all-weather canopy so that children can use this area more often. Two new staff share responsibility for teaching, learning and day to day management of the EYFS. They work closely with the Year 2 class teacher to maintain continuity and progression in learning throughout Key Stage 1. The curriculum addresses early learning goals from all six areas of learning and includes the teaching of phonics. Daily plans feature a suitable balance of child initiated play and adult-led activities and resources are colour coded so children can self-select and organise their own learning. Children who find learning difficult are now identified early so that additional support can be provided. Teachers make regular assessments to monitor how well children are progressing and the 2008 Foundation Stage Profile shows that the majority of children made the progress expected of them.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving pupils' writing skills. Standards improved this year and monitoring data show that most pupils are currently making satisfactory progress. Results in national tests improved in both key stages in 2008, particularly in Key Stage 2 where almost all Year 6 pupils achieved level 4 and one fifth of them attained the higher level 5. 'Talking partners' and 'big writing' have helped pupils to plan and develop their writing. All pupils have targets to improve their written work and they complete a written assessment task each half-term so their progress can be accurately measured. Handwriting and spellings are practiced regularly and better quality marking by teachers provides pupils with clear advice on how to improve their writing. Some older pupils have begun to assess their own work and identify what is needed to improve the quality of their work.

Progress made in providing more opportunities for higher attaining pupils is broadly satisfactory, but the school has had insufficient time to impact fully in all areas, particularly in Key Stage 1. For example, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining level 5 in English, mathematics and science improved this year and exceeded local and national averages. However, in Year 2 no pupils attained level 3 in any subjects. Current monitoring information indicates that a higher proportion of more able pupils is on track to achieve higher levels this year in Key Stage 2 but this does not extend into the earlier key stage. The school development plan recognises that teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving need raising and work needs to be planned in all lessons to add challenge for more able pupils. Some

progress has been made in identifying gifted and talented pupils but this remains an area for further development.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving teachers' marking, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. Regular monitoring by the headteacher tracks the progress of all pupils, including those that find learning difficult. Rigorous assessment procedures are in place to gauge progress in literacy and numeracy but they are new in science and require further embedding. Baseline testing, target-setting and termly progress reviews provide a wide range of information on how well pupils are progressing. This information is increasingly being used to inform lesson planning so the needs of all pupils can be met. However, subject leadership is relatively new, and increasing teachers' understanding of the use of assessment data remains an area for further development. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that marking has improved significantly and is contributing towards helping pupils improve the quality of their work. It is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, mainly because it is applied consistently and pupils are given time to respond to comments made by the teacher.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
Her Majesty's Inspector.