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Mr Gary Boyd  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Boyd

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 January 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the chair of governors and your pupils, who were very friendly and helpful.

Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes and almost all of the teaching staff have joined the school over the past two years. A new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leader was appointed in September 2008, together with a completely new team in the Reception classes.

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 6 and 7 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise the quality of teaching and provision in the EYFS
- make consistent use of data and marking to ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils to enable them to meet challenging targets
- work with parents to improve attendance levels.

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 pupils' achievement.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were exceptionally low between 2004 and 2006. There was some improvement in 2007 but they remained far too low, with fewer than half of pupils reaching the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. Many of these pupils had made inadequate progress during their time

in Key Stage 2. In 2008, there was a very significant improvement. The majority of pupils reached the expected level in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils had made good progress from Year 2. This progress had accelerated markedly in Year 5 and 6. While standards are much improved, they remain below average overall as too few pupils reach the higher levels. School data indicate rapidly accelerating progress throughout the school, with most pupils on track to reach their challenging targets.

Under purposeful and clear leadership, the EYFS has improved significantly since the last inspection. As a result of good teaching, the EYFS provides a very stimulating and welcoming environment. Consequently, children settle quickly and become eager and confident learners. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the social and language skills of the children, most of whom join the school with little or no English. Very good tracking and assessment systems have been introduced which enable staff to map the progress of every child from the time they join the school. These systems are being used with increasing effect to challenge pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning.

The visit confirmed the school leaders' view that teaching and learning continues to improve and that a majority of lessons are now good. As a result, pupils are motivated, behave very well and are making good progress. Pupils say how much they enjoy their learning and this is evident in most classrooms. Teachers are making better use of data to set challenging targets for all pupils. Regular progress meetings with school leaders are becoming effective in holding teachers to account for the progress of their pupils and in identifying those who are in need of additional support. Marking has also improved, with the 'two stars and a wish' system being used consistently throughout the school. Pupils are clear that this helps them to improve their work. The school acknowledges there is still more to be done. For example, more able pupils are not always challenged to achieve as well as they might.

There has been marked improvement to date in pupils' attendance during the current academic year. While attendance remains below average, it is now in line with that of schools operating in a similar context. The school is working closely with parents as part of a successful strategy to engage fully with all groups within its diverse community. As a result, more parents understand the importance of good attendance to their children's achievement. Strategies such as the attendance trophy have helped to highlight for pupils the importance of coming to school regularly. Extended absence for holidays is no longer permitted. While systems are rigorous, the school acknowledges there is more to be done, particularly in reducing the number of persistent absentees.

The good improvement is being driven by the very effective and determined leadership of the senior management team, ably supported by a knowledgeable governing body and enthusiastic staff team. The local authority has provided a range of effective support tailored to the school's needs. For example, support for

programmes designed to accelerate progress in literacy and numeracy have been particularly effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee  
Additional Inspector