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18 March 2009

Mrs S Attwell  
The Headteacher  
The Beacon Infant and Nursery School  
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Dear Mrs Attwell

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 11 March 2009, 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 staff, governors and pupils for their help.

Since the last report there have been considerable changes to the outdoor environment and how this is resourced. Structural alterations have improved toilet facilities in the Nursery. Currently, one teaching assistant is on long-term sick leave covered by an assistant on a short-term contract, but otherwise staffing remains as it was.

As a result of the inspection on 5 March 2008, the school was asked to:

- increase the precision with which teachers use assessment information to set tasks that challenge all groups of pupils and thereby drive up standards and pupils' achievement
- provide more outside resources for the Reception classes to enrich children's experiences in all areas of learning.

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.

Much improved, and now good, systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are being used consistently in all classes. This aspect of the school's work is being well led and managed and has drawn all staff together as an enthusiastic team committed to making the process work. The school has built effectively on the good practice already evident in terms of support for those with learning difficulties and/or



disabilities in matching work to the needs of all pupils. The school has a very clear picture of the experience and attainment of children when they first join the Nursery. Better analysis of assessment now ensures that pupils' achievement and standards in each year group are accurately identified. Staff make good use of data to plan work which is relevant to pupils' needs as well as being interesting and enjoyable. This is having a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Predictions based on careful analysis lead to modifications in provision designed to overcome weaknesses and build on strengths.

Good Early Years Foundation Stage practice noted in the last report is being used as a model throughout the school. This is having very positive effects not only on personal, social and emotional development but also in providing a secure basis for the development of communication, language and literacy skills. The school's records show that whilst standards are still below average, rates of progress are improving, with pupils now achieving satisfactorily. The future looks bright with pupils beginning to show the independence, confidence and positive attitudes that will underpin future learning.

Good use of targets, based on what pupils already understand, know and can do, has accelerated pupils' achievement and is raising standards. Pupils know their targets and are keen to achieve them. Teachers mark work systematically with these in mind and clearly show pupils how to make improvements. This dialogue has enhanced the staff's appreciation of the power of assessment as a tool to bring about change. The process is proving most effective in writing, where standards are set to be broadly average this year at the end of Year 2, having been well below this level over the past five years. Bringing standards in reading and mathematics to the same level already forms part of the school development plan.

Since the last inspection outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage children has been substantially redeveloped. Progress from this point of view is outstanding. The area is well resourced and presents an attractive and stimulating environment. Records and direct observation show that it is used to the full in all weathers. Although limited somewhat by the single door, children have free access to outdoor play and can make choices about activities and equipment. There is a wealth of ride-on and role play opportunities which encourage interaction with other children and adults. Provision is having a very good impact on social and physical skills and fosters children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Speaking and listening skills and children's confidence are benefiting from improvements to outdoor play. Discussing parking tickets, debating when the trike taxi will come, and guessing what patterns the wet paint on tyres will make as they roll downhill, exercise young minds!

The money, time and effort devoted to developing provision have been well spent in terms of learning and children's enjoyment. This is a good example of the effectiveness with which senior staff and governors monitor the impact of their decisions. Advantage has been taken of good support from the local authority and

this has contributed effectively to staff development, improving the quality of planning, assessment and teaching.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart  
Additional Inspector