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Ms Eiry Cheney  
Acting Headteacher  
Great Linford Primary School  
St Leger Drive  
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MK14 5BL

Dear Ms Cheney

### 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 3 June 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to thank those who took time to talk to me, including the headteacher, the chair of governors, the senior management team and the School Improvement Partner.

The headteacher is currently on maternity leave and the school is being led by the deputy headteacher. There have been no other changes in staffing or in the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- accelerate improvements in teaching and learning to raise standards and ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress
- ensure that subject leaders monitor teaching and learning in their subjects, especially the quality of advice given to pupils of each age group, to make sure pupils can take responsibility for improving their learning
- help pupils to develop adequate skills in literacy and numeracy to secure their future economic well-being.

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. Progress towards addressing each issue is satisfactory. One additional issue was raised during the inspection. The designated person for coordinating child protection at the school has not had the required level of training. This needs to be addressed immediately so that the school meets the current government requirements for safeguarding children.

The quality of teaching and learning in lessons has improved since the last inspection. This is evidenced by the school's own accurate and regular monitoring of lessons and pupils' work, by observations conducted by external professionals and as

seen during this inspection. These improvements have come about as a result of the support and modelling by colleagues within and outside the school. As a united team, the staff have embraced this support with enthusiasm. The determination of staff to make the necessary changes in their teaching was identified at the last inspection. This continues to be the case. The senior team and other professionals now expect most lessons to be of good quality, particularly when lesson observations are unannounced. Staff have risen to this challenge and all are clear about what makes a good lesson. Better lesson planning is helping teachers to deliver lessons of better quality consistently. In turn, this is ensuring that pupils make better progress and start to make up for the underachievement identified in November. Staff are making more consistent and effective use of learning objectives and success criteria with pupils. This informs pupils about what they are expected to learn and is helping them to be more actively involved in lessons and to work out for themselves how they might improve. When implemented regularly, the school's marking policy successfully helps pupils to know how well they have done and what to do next. But this is not always the case. Sometimes lesson plans do not show what the adults will do differently so that pupils avoid making the same mistakes on subsequent occasions.

In order to maintain the improvement in teaching and learning, there are three things that need further attention. First, lesson plans need to be further improved so that staff consistently provide activities that are clearly tailored to pupils of different ages and abilities within each class, with reference to targets and expected levels of attainment as appropriate. Second, when they plan lessons, teachers need to make better use of the improved assessment information that is now available, to show how pupils' skills are being built upon. Third, the improved engagement by pupils is clearly making a difference to their learning and, with even tighter feedback through marking or discussion, this can be developed further.

The school has quite rightly addressed the second point for improvement in its widest sense, to ensure that leaders at all levels monitor teaching and learning more effectively. As a result, in addition to the work by the leaders of literacy and numeracy, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and governors have improved the quality and increased the frequency of their monitoring activities. Some of these activities have been conducted alongside experienced colleagues, but staff are taking responsibility and ownership of the process. Increasingly, they are using what they find out to change what they do and then measuring their success by looking at the difference that this makes to pupils' academic progress. Talking to pupils specifically about their perspectives on learning is highlighted by the headteachers and leaders of literacy and numeracy as particularly useful in providing information about the quality of the school's work. Through these activities, senior staff are accurately identifying areas of weakness. They consider why this is the case and this has increased the flexibility with which they can provide support to pupils. What they are not so good at is drilling down into the information on particular groups of pupils more closely to look for the aspects that are the most successful. It is still early days for governors and most subject leaders to fulfil the full range of monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. In particular, the increased involvement by governors needs to be maintained and their experiences extended so that



expertise can be spread more widely throughout the governing body. They also need to ensure that their monitoring activities and any challenge to the school are securely focused on outcomes for pupils.

In order to make up for previous underachievement, the school set the challenging target for all pupils to make a whole National Curriculum level this academic year. At the time of the last inspection it was too soon to see if this was likely, although pupils in Years 2 and 6 were already making better progress in their work. Towards the end of the current school year, the school data show that the accelerated progress has continued but is not yet consistent for all year groups. It is likely that Year 6 pupils will make better progress than their achievement in Year 5 suggested. However, standards remain low and the progress that these pupils have made throughout Key Stage 2 is likely to be inadequate. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 reaching age-appropriate attainment in English and mathematics, as in most other year groups, has increased as the year has progressed. Good progress for pupils in Year 2 means that they have made up for the dip in their performance in Year 1. Current Year 1 pupils have maintained the good start that they had in the Reception class and those coming to the end of their first year in school are on track to reach age-related expectations. Year 4 pupils, now halfway through Key Stage 2 are on track to make at least satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6. The school has identified that the pattern of achievement for pupils in Years 3 and 5 is not consistent for all groups. A weakness identified for pupils across the school is their writing skills. This needs to be addressed urgently, as does the general achievement for Year 5 pupils as they move through Year 6. Nevertheless, the school has demonstrated that it can do what is required to accelerate pupils' progress and is confident that the improvement can continue. Suitable strategies are in place for this to happen as long as the momentum and attention to detail are maintained.

When they submitted their statement of action to support the school, the local authority was required by Ofsted to amend their plan to make it more suitable. This has not happened. Nevertheless, the school is receiving the right support at the right time. Support from the School Improvement Partner and local authority consultants has been well received by staff and has helped them to move on at a pace that they can maintain so that good practice can be consolidated. The school has been partnered with a successful local primary school with similar contexts and characteristics. Good, sensitive relationships have helped the staff to make the most of that school's expertise. Staff have grown in confidence and, as reported at the time of the last inspection, continue to take ownership of what needs to be done and remain determined to improve outcomes for the pupils.

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

Heather Yaxley  
Her Majesty's Inspector