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Mrs Kelly Armstrong
The Headteacher
Field Court Junior School
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Dear Mrs Armstrong

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 25 June 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please convey my thanks to the staff, pupils, parents, governors, the consultant headteacher and the local authority officer who talked to me about the school's work.

Since the previous inspection there have been changes in staff. In February 2009, an assistant headteacher was promoted to a post in another school and replaced temporarily by a seconded assistant headteacher.

As a result of the inspection on 25 and 26 November 2008, the school was asked to: accelerate the pupils' progress in English and mathematics; ensure that teaching is consistently good and meets the needs of all learners especially the higher attainers; and, make better use of assessment to enhance the quality of marking in order to give the pupils clear targets on how to improve their work.

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.

The school's internal records of the pupils' progress, including pupils' work, indicate strongly that achievement and standards in English and mathematics are improving at a swift pace. Recent tracking data, coupled with the teachers' assessment of Year 6 pupils, show that the school is on course to improve its results significantly in the 2009 national tests. More pupils are also likely to attain at the higher levels in both subjects. Nonetheless, the school recognises that it has still more work to do to ensure that the number of more able pupils achieving at the higher levels,



particularly in writing, continues to increase. This remains a key priority for improvement. In all other year groups, standards are also improving and the picture is encouraging. Pupils are quickly catching up on previous underachievement; most are making good progress.

The school has developed a rigorous tracking system to monitor the pupils' achievement and there is an increasing bank of data charting their progress. Senior leaders are focused sharply on analysing all the pupils' achievement including the performance of different groups. Targets set for pupils are challenging and there are a range of appropriate intervention programmes to provide additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good strategies are in place to develop a consistent approach across the school to improve handwriting, punctuation, spelling and problem solving in mathematics. Work in the pupils' books, coupled with lesson observations in literacy and mathematics, showed pleasing evidence of the positive impact of these strategies.

Lesson observations conducted with the headteacher confirmed the accuracy of her views of the improved consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching is good overall. Nevertheless, the quality of learning could be more challenging. Detailed lesson planning demonstrates that teachers are aware of pupils' general levels of ability and most tasks are suitably differentiated. That said, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, particularly in writing activities. More also could be done to develop writing further across the curriculum. Good improvements have been made to assessment and marking practices. Pupils know their targets for improvement and they are given clear guidance on how to achieve them. Classrooms are well organised with appropriate displays and resources to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

Parents and pupils spoken to were unanimous in their praise for the rapid improvements made by the headteacher since her arrival, and rightly so. She is providing energetic leadership and is focused relentlessly on raising standards. Parents and pupils appreciate the introduction of targets for pupils, regular meetings, weekly newsletters, improved consultation and the increased number of after school clubs. Pupils say their voice matters and they are listened to.

Senior leaders and staff are growing in confidence as a result of good professional development and training opportunities. Staff have embraced change enthusiastically and there is a noticeable team spirit existing within the school. All, including the governors, are working exceptionally hard to make the school better. Monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders are systematic and focused. Subject leadership is developing well but still has some way to go to ensure all at the school become leaders of learning in their own right. Governors are attending relevant training and are increasingly improving their monitoring role to hold the school to account.

The local authority's statement of action meets requirements and contains effective strategies, particularly in relation to coaching and mentoring, to help the school to

improve. The consultant headteacher is providing effective support and the project team is monitoring the school's progress assiduously.

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

Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector