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Ms R Fenwick  
The Headteacher  
Thorntree Primary School  
Thorntree Road  
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Dear Ms Fenwick

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 October 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to those of your colleagues who met with me during the day.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 September 2008, the school was asked to: rigorously monitor the quality of learning in order to make teaching at least good; raise achievement to good; and, ensure that learning is challenging for all groups of pupils.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Based on their starting points, pupils make good progress in their learning. A significant improvement since the previous inspection is the level of challenge given to more able pupils. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 6 on handling data, more able pupils had to construct a graph based on their ability to find and interpret data with a paragraph of information. In Year 5, more able pupils were motivated to succeed, especially when their teacher said, 'Remember if you finish your extension task, there is an extension, extension task for you to do.' Lesson observations show pupils enjoy learning and work hard. They take particular care and pride in the way they present their work. Pupils sustain concentration well in working independently. They are very enthusiastic in contributing to both paired discussions and whole-class question and answer sessions.



The senior leadership team carry out regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning across the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. Identified areas for improvement are tackled immediately, for example previous weaknesses in pupils' presentation skills. Through the results of monitoring, teachers' planning has improved significantly, especially in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils by gender, ethnicity and ability. There is a very strong focus within planning to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are included fully in lessons. Evidence from the monitoring visit, supported by the school's own monitoring, shows that most teaching in the school is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. On the rare occasions where teaching is satisfactory, particularly in Year 2, this is linked to pupils spending too long sitting on the carpet and inconsistency in the way pupils' behaviour is managed.

The school has taken positive and determined action to raise pupils' achievement through introducing a rigorous and effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Assessments take place at the end of each half term and where pupils are identified as underachieving, effective intervention programmes are put in place to address the issue. A significant strength is that the results of such intervention programmes are monitored closely to ensure that they have been successful. Class teachers are held to account by senior leaders for the progress of their pupils, which is a significant move forward. Learning support assistants play a key and positive role in the successful implementation of many of the intervention strategies, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In its determined drive to improve, the school has benefitted from the effective support from its School Improvement Partner. A recurring theme of the monitoring visit, especially through discussions with yourself and key staff, is the absolute commitment to becoming a good school. The way in which the school has embraced a training initiative aimed at ensuring school self-evaluation is robust and the driver behind school improvement is impressive.

Please would you tell your pupils how impressed I was with the quality of their singing? I thought it was outstanding.

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

David Curtis  
Additional Inspector

