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Ms Shabana Hamid
Calverton Primary School
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Dear Ms Hamid

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Friday 16 October, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to all the pupils and members of staff who gave up their time to talk to me.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- provide effective opportunities for extended writing, the development of basic number skills and mathematical investigations
- bring greater consistency to learning by developing teachers' questioning skills and ensuring consistent challenge for the more-able pupils
- provide better learning opportunities for reception children in a suitable outdoor classroom.

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 capacity for sustained improvement.

The school makes very good use of assessment data. This is helping teaching staff to monitor closely the progress of groups and individuals, and target setting is challenging. These procedures, allied to consistently good teaching and learning, are leading to improvements in attainment. The pupils enter the school with levels of prior attainment that are well below average. Unvalidated data for Key Stage 2 results in 2009 show that the improvements of recent years have been at least sustained and that attainment is now close to the national average in English, science and mathematics. The improvements in mathematics are particularly impressive. Pupil progress is good. Assessment data show that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language, are making good progress in their work. The significant numbers of pupils who arrive after the start of the school year, often



with very little English, are also making good progress. This was clearly illustrated in lesson observations where pupils from markedly different ethnic groups, some who had only been in the country for quite short periods of time, also make good progress and especially in English and mathematics.

All lessons seen featured good learning; planning for the needs of different pupils was evident and all were challenged in their work. Lesson observations and work samples showed that basic number skills are improving well, helped by the use of mathematical investigation work. Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques well in their lessons and some very good use of assessment for learning (AfL) techniques help to ensure that higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged and motivated. English books in all years showed evidence of challenge and there were many good, and some outstanding, examples of extended writing. This is, however, an area where further consistency is needed. Although extended writing is a key feature of English work, it was not apparent in other subjects, and some exercise books, covering subjects such as science, geography, history, religious education and science, indicated that opportunities to set the pupils challenging tasks, involving extended writing, were not always seized.

In recent years, the school has been running with a budget deficit. This was inherited by the current leadership team when they were appointed some three years ago. Successful efforts have been made to reduce the deficit. However, the existence of a deficit has meant that the senior team and the governors have not been able to make all the improvements they desire. In addition, some large expenditures have had to be made on urgent improvements to the school buildings. This has meant that senior managers and governors have had to budget prudently and set priorities with care. Some major refurbishment works were taking place during this visit. The outdoor classroom for reception pupils is an important priority but, because of the other urgent work needed, this facility remains a plan rather than a reality, however, work is due to commence shortly.

The school is improving well. Notable improvements have taken place since the previous inspection and most test and examination results have shown a trend of improvement over the last three years. Though there are still weaknesses in writing that need to be addressed, sustained improvement is evident on many fronts. The school enjoys good support from the local authority and is well led and managed. The governors are supportive and there is a strong commitment from all stakeholders to secure further improvements.

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

Bill Stoneham
Additional inspector

September 2009