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Dear Ms Field

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 December 2009, and particularly for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the chair of governors, staff, your deputy, pupils and the school improvement advisor.

There have been no staff changes since the inspection took place, but the school underwent some significant disruption during recent building works. This resulted in the construction of a new entrance and reception area, parents' meeting room and new staff room. The new accommodation areas were officially opened in September 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 December 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by improving teaching
- promote pupils' greater independence and curiosity in Years 1 to 6
- ensure there is closer monitoring of teaching and clearer long-term direction for school improvement.

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

Since the previous inspection, the leaders, supported by their school improvement partner and the local authority's intensive support programme, have worked hard to raise pupils' attainment. There are clear signs that this work is having a positive impact. For example, pupils' progress is accelerating as more achieve or exceed the rates of progress expected in a term. However, this is not the case for all year groups, as some pupils still lag behind others. The targets set for the oldest pupils are challenging, particularly for the current group of Year 6 pupils. Teachers are now held accountable for the progress of their class and for how well they are doing relative to their starting points. Checks show that current Year 5 pupils are more likely to reach their targets in 2011. Despite some evidence of improved teaching in



Years 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in Year 2 continues to be low. That said, Year 2 pupils' current attainment in writing, number and science work is edging upwards, albeit slowly. A well-taught art lesson in Year 2 illustrated how well pupils can enthuse about their tasks and learn effectively.

In Years 3 to 6, improvements to teaching are bearing fruit in terms of accelerating pupils' improving progress. They are also helping to introduce more activities to engage pupils' interests and make them think more, but this varies between classes. For example, teaching in a Year 6 lesson was precise, rather than exciting, while in a Year 5 science lesson, some opportunities were missed to set up investigative activities with a more realistic problem to solve. In contrast, Year 4 pupils had a clear idea of both 'what' they needed to do, and 'how' they could do it. They really enjoyed watching classmates' role play prior to starting their extended writing in their 'Big Write' activity. The school's monitoring shows that planning is more consistent.

The clear and useful information you collect on pupils' progress is leading to a more insightful understanding of the progress of different groups of pupils, such as Black Caribbean pupils, who now make similar progress to their peers. The support from the local authority in helping staff to raise pupils' basic skill levels has been good in terms of advisory support from consultants. The school's monitoring of teaching is systematic and provides a largely accurate overview of its quality. As you identified, it now needs to focus more rigorously on how pupils are learning, in order to identify specific aspects of teaching that need improvement to help raise pupils' attainment still further.

Partly in response to the inspection, senior leaders and governors reviewed their strategic planning, and your plan to move the school from 'satisfactory' to 'good' is clear and realistic. It includes more precise criteria by which to judge your achievements. This has built the school's capacity to improve as the plan now has more rigour. The governors have planned a more rigorous programme for checking the school's effectiveness at first hand, but that this has yet to be fully implemented.

Pupils are generally well behaved, and polite. They welcomed the chance to talk about their school and say that they feel they are being given better challenges in their work. Pastoral provision is a particular strength and the school is seen to be at the heart of the community. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and pupils say they feel safe.

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  
Kevin Hodge  
Additional inspector

