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Stuart Allen  
Mile Cross Primary School  
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Dear Mr Allen

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 11–12 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards, particularly in basic skills in mathematics, reading and writing
- provide rich contexts for pupils to develop their speaking skills and to rehearse and share their ideas and thus sharpen their thinking and increase their confidence
- enable pupils to become independent, take more responsibility for their learning and to see themselves more as partners in their learning in lessons
- improve teaching quality further, particularly to ensure that potentially higher attaining pupils are challenged sufficiently.

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

Pupils' achievement has improved in the 15 months since the previous inspection. Whilst standards in writing, mathematics and science remain below average by the end of Year 6 they have risen considerably in the year that the school has been open. All targets have been met and exceeded in writing and science. Mathematics and reading, although improving, are still areas where the school is rightly focused on raising standards still further. The Year 2 results for 2009 in reading, writing and mathematics, remained well below national averages. The current Year 2 cohort are on course to meet their more challenging targets, with two-thirds of pupils expected to reach average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. This represents good progress given their much lower than expected starting points on entry into both the Nursery and the Reception classes. There are a number

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of factors contributing to this improved achievement. Assessments are more rigorous. Pupils' individual progress is regularly tracked, teachers' expectations are higher and the legacy of underachievement is being addressed. Pupils know what their individual targets are for English and mathematics. A more creative learning environment, where skills learnt in one subject are transferred to others, captures pupils' enjoyment of learning and, in turn, is helping to raise standards. This can be seen for example in Year 2 history lessons on the Great Fire of London, where pupils write a 'diary' about the fire. Also, in Year 6, where pupils work on the theme of 'Could you be a superhero?' the topic involves using knowledge and skills learnt in other subjects in order to create a short animated film of their literacy work. High standards were seen in their work in information and communication technology. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their learning, show good behaviour and are keen to do well. Progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage remains good, as at the time of the last inspection. So that children leave Reception and start Year 1 with standards which are broadly average for their age. This represents good progress.

At the time of the last inspection, the school, on its new site, had been open for just three days. Routines and systems were obviously new. These are now fully embedded and having a positive impact on raising teachers' and support staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, there are some inconsistencies in how far teachers and support staff encourage and allow pupils' own independent learning. Among the factors contributing to raising standards are:

- good learning support for the exceptionally high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties in the learning resource base
- family groups which are ability led for specific phonic and literacy teaching
- setting in Year 5 and 6.

There has been considerable progress in raising pupil's self-esteem and confidence. Nurture groups, 'Reading Thursdays', performances, and assemblies held in front of family and friends have all made a positive contribution to this. The school has worked hard in trying to involve parents and carers in their children's education. Recently held open days where parents were invited in to make Christmas decorations with their children have been highly successful and is another way that children's confidence has been raised.

Managers at all levels are developing the skills to monitor provision effectively in order to raise standards. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher form a strong team who are accurate in their knowledge of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. Drive and determination is obvious in their enthusiasm and resolve to ensure that the pupils in their care receive the best. It is this driving ambition to raise standards and achievement for the pupils that is central to all that the school is striving to achieve. Consequently, the capacity to continue to improve is good. Safeguarding procedures at the school are thorough. At the time of the inspection, all adults who come into regular contact with pupils had been suitably

checked. The school's work with partner agencies to support and protect vulnerable pupils is good. The local authority involvement in supporting the school in moving forward has also been satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is good and accurate in its review of what needs to be done to improve.

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

Sue Vale  
Additional Inspector