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Mrs F French
Headteacher
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Upper Arley
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Dear Mrs French

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 October 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information that you provided, both before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, the chair of governors and the school improvement partner who took the time to talk to me.

The extensive building work that caused significant disruption at the last inspection has been completed. It provides a purpose built classroom and outside area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a new classroom for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

As a result of the inspection on 15 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that the monitoring, evaluation and support of teaching and learning leads to sustained improvement in achievement and standards, particularly in mathematics
- establish, as a matter of urgency, the Early Years Foundation Stage in a suitable learning environment, in order to meet the children's needs more fully
- develop strategies for the professional development of teaching staff, so that leadership and management responsibilities can be distributed more evenly.

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.



Your focused educational direction and clear vision for school development has been central to the good improvement made since the last inspection. Senior leaders have implemented a plan to raise attainment by improving the quality of teaching and learning; and in particular accelerate pupils' progress, raise standards in mathematics. As a result, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is thorough, accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and has led to thoughtful action being taken to improve the progress pupils make. There is now a comprehensive analysis of attainment data; whole school tracking of pupil progress and target setting are in place, to guide teachers' planning for the next steps of learning. Reviews of attainment and progress take place regularly, enabling leaders and teachers to identify priorities to promote individual pupil progress.

The support provided by the local authority has had a positive impact on school improvement. For example, literacy and numeracy consultants have worked alongside teachers to develop their expertise in teaching English and mathematics. This has been particularly beneficial, as three of the four teachers were newly qualified. These initiatives have led to most pupils now making good or better progress and attaining standards by the end of Year 6 that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Notable improvement has been made in mathematics. This stems from the introduction of a calculation policy that ensures systematic development of pupils' calculation skills as they pass through the school. Pupils clearly enjoy their activities, showing positive attitudes and a keenness to learn. From their skill levels and abilities on starting school, pupils' achievement is good.

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been much improved since the last inspection and is now good. The classroom provides a bright and welcoming setting for learning and ready access to a good quality outdoor area. Children achieve well because of consistently good quality teaching and learning that effectively meets their individual needs. Adults provide activities that are both practical and stimulating to capture and maintain children's interest. The balance between adult led activities and those chosen by children is good, with staff showing skilled intervention and flexibility in a way that enhances children's learning. A notable feature is the weekly opportunity for pupils in Year 1 to work and play alongside children in Reception. This makes a significant contribution to their personal, social and emotional development. Children make good progress and achieve well across the areas of learning.

The last inspection indicated the need to delegate leadership and management responsibilities more evenly amongst staff. Improvement in this aspect has been tempered, because three of the four teachers were new to teaching and the emphasis has rightly been on developing their expertise in promoting good pupil progress. This has proved successful. Nonetheless, senior leaders have provided a wide range of good quality professional development opportunities to successfully develop teachers' classroom skills and their capability to take on leadership roles. Consequently, all staff, including those new to leadership responsibilities, are

involved in making decisions about the development of the school. This is having a positive impact on the expertise of teachers and learning support assistants in influencing the direction of the school and there is a strong sense of teamwork. It is clear that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is now good.

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

Melvyn Hemmings

Additional Inspector