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Miss A Nightingale
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Nightingale

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 November 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. It was most helpful to talk to the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and to pupils.

Since the last inspection there have been three teaching staff changes. Currently, there is an unfilled vacancy for the position of deputy headteacher which is to be created by the reduction of one assistant headteacher post. Similarly, there have been changes to the non-teaching staff and the deployment of an extra teacher into the Early Years Foundation Stage. The local authority has supported the school by providing regular consultancy support in science, literacy and numeracy. A monitoring team led by the local authority has visited the school each term and provides a report to the governing body. The number of pupils at the school has increased, partly due to new arrivals from overseas. This term has seen 16 new pupils admitted since 1 September 2009 most of whom are in the upper Key Stage 2 classes. The extensive building works which have been ongoing since July 2008 were completed during the summer holiday period of 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 16–17 September 2008, the school was asked to do the following.

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Ensure that teaching and learning in the school is of a consistently high quality at all times.
- Improve levels of attendance and punctuality.

- Provide rigorous academic guidance for all pupils.

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.

The quality of teaching is improving due to rigorous monitoring, effective training and staff development and the good consultancy support of the local authority. Most teaching is satisfactory, but the proportion of good lessons is increasing. As a result, the rate of progress which pupils make in their learning is also improving. While the most recent national test results for Year 6 pupils show a decline in progress and lower standards in English and science, the school's tracking system, supported by the local authority monitoring reports, show that throughout the school pupils' progress is improving. In lessons seen during the inspection teaching was mostly good with some satisfactory features and this represents an improved profile of teaching since the last inspection. All lessons are planned to a set format, but some concentrate too much on the activities which pupils will do rather than on what they will learn. The best lessons structure learning in a systematic way building on what pupils know and can do and challenging them to improve their knowledge and understanding. Good and effective use is made of media and digital technology to engage pupils' interest and sustain their concentration. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. There are inconsistencies between classes in the way targets are reviewed so that pupils can accelerate their learning. Similarly, there is variance in the quality and usefulness of marking to help pupils know what to do to improve.

School leaders and governors are determined to raise standards and improve the school. Appropriate procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils, including the required checks to the criminal records bureau. Governors have twice re-advertised the position of deputy headteacher as they strive to make a high-quality appointment to this important post. The school's leadership has established an effective tracking system to identify pupils' underperformance. Intervention systems to support pupils are being developed. Curriculum leaders are beginning to analyse the progress which pupils make and this informs the senior leaders who are developing suitable action plans to improve the school's performance. The attendance rates of pupils are improving due to the success of the leadership's strategies to celebrate regular attendance and to alert parents and carers to the importance of pupils making a full attendance. Nevertheless, attendance rates remain below average and, despite the school's best efforts, several pupils miss some of their schooling because of extended heritage visits to their country of origin.

Pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving consistently as shown by national test results over three years. Standards in English declined in the 2009 test results. The school's records, local authority monitoring and observations during the inspection show that pupils are making better progress this term and the rate of progress is improving due to an increase in the proportion of good lessons. This improvement is

at an early stage and the school is not complacent about the need to raise standards by improving pupils' learning.

The local authority provides good support to the school and has added to the school's capacity to improve by training staff and modelling good and effective teaching practice. The local authority's confidence in the school's leadership is evidenced by the reducing amount of support it provides as the school begins to demonstrate improvements. It is too soon to measure the full impact of recent improvements in the school's provision as they have yet to bring about sustained rises in the outcomes for pupils.

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

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector