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## PROTECT-INSPECTION

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21 October 2009

Mrs Jean Ennis and Mrs Judith Brown  
Ironville and Codnor Park Primary School  
Victoria Street  
Ironville  
Derbyshire  
NG16 5NB

Dear Mrs Ennis and Mrs Brown

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 October 2009 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks also to the chair of governors and the local authority's School Improvement Partner who, at short notice, made themselves available to meet with me. I would also like to thank the pupils and those teachers observed during lessons.

Since the school's last inspection a number of temporary teachers have been appointed to cover for the absence of permanent staff. The local authority has also provided additional support by allocating time for two consultant teachers, one for literacy and the other a numeracy specialist, to work with teachers for part of each week.

As a result of the inspection in February 2009, the school was asked to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and the curriculum in Key Stage 2, and assessment procedures, all to ensure that all pupils reach their targets, particularly in English and mathematics.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement, particularly in raising pupils' achievement throughout Key Stage 2.

Since the school's last inspection more robust assessment procedures have been put in place. Combined with the more regular and systematic monitoring of lessons and pupils' work, the quality and consistency of the teaching throughout Key Stage 2 have improved and are raising attainment and improving pupils' achievements. The results of the most recent national assessments for Year 6 pupils in 2009 show



significant improvement to attainment in English and mathematics compared with the previous year. The school's assessments of pupils' performance currently in Years 3 to 6 also reflect an improving trend. There is still more to do to improve the teaching and support provided for pupils who have the potential to reach and exceed the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Key Stage 1, remains a strength of the school so that younger children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well.

The use of literacy and numeracy consultants is boosting the confidence of staff and helping to improve the teaching in Key Stage 2. Temporary teachers, including the support provided by consultants, are making a good contribution towards improving teachers' and pupils' confidence and performance in English and mathematics lessons, but the school's capacity to sustain this improvement remains fragile whilst permanent staff are not in school. Assessments show that the large majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are making at least satisfactory progress, but some pupils of average or higher abilities are still falling short of their expected targets. This is partly due to a legacy of underachievement that was recognised at the time of the school's last inspection, but is also because inconsistencies still remain in the demands placed on pupils in lessons. Teachers' planning is more consistent across classes and takes account of assessment and the progress pupils have made. However, the pace of learning varies when class discussions are too long so there is less time for pupils to practise their writing or number work.

The headteachers have been successful in adapting the way they manage Key Stage 2 by allocating particular responsibilities for assessment and for expanding the creative curriculum to key staff. As a result, there is a sharper oversight of pupils' performance because assessment systems are more accessible and accurate in tracking how well different groups and individuals are doing. There is scope now to improve the way teachers use this information as some pupils are still falling short of their age related levels in reading, writing or mathematics. In addition, the headteachers and School Improvement Partner have been instrumental in setting up a cycle of monitoring, audit and review. This is focusing on key priorities such as pupils' writing and problem solving in mathematics, but lessons sometimes leave too little time for pupils to consolidate or practice their independent writing or number work. A broader range of management activities in Key Stage 2, such as peer monitoring of each others' lessons, 'book looks' when staff compare pupils' work to assess levels in writing, and staff training have contributed to sharpening school improvement planning aimed at eradicating underachievement. To a large extent this is beginning to accelerate the progress of most pupils, but some of average and higher ability are still short of their expected targets.

Planning has also been reviewed and adapted to extend the creative curriculum by incorporating a broader range of topics, such as the current focus throughout Key Stage 2 on the Second World War, which incorporates, drama, music and art as well as opportunities for pupils to write about evacuees and to discuss the moral dilemmas that families faced during this challenging period of history. Special

projects linked to famous authors, like the recent work pupils have done on Tolkien's fantasy mythologies, have enthused the pupils, incorporating visits, extended writing and a range of work that links different subjects. The coordinator responsible for adapting the curriculum this way has also put in place a skills matrix, linked to the school's assessments, which is a useful and productive aid for teachers that helps them to check how well pupils are learning core skills, such as reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

The local authority has provided good support since the school was given a Notice to Improve. Its local authority support team, literacy and numeracy consultants and advisers, as well as the School Improvement Partner, have provided good oversight of pupils' progress and each of the points for improvement highlighted in the school's last inspection.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charalambos Loizou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charalambos Loizou  
Additional Inspector