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Mr Alan Bayford
The Headteacher
West Minster Primary School
St. George's Avenue
Sheerness
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Dear Mr Bayford

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 February 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also thank your pupils, who were always very helpful.

Since the last inspection there have been substantial changes in staffing. As executive headteacher of the federation to which West Minster Primary belongs, you took on responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school after the resignation of the head of school in January 2010. An assistant headteacher, with responsibility for Key Stage 2 and for numeracy and science across the school, was appointed in September 2009 and a member of the Key Stage 1 staff was given responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and literacy. There have also been changes of teacher in Years 6, 4, 3 and Reception.

As a result of the inspection on 12-13 May 2009, the school was asked to:

- improve standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2
- enhance the rigour and quality of the monitoring of teaching and learning
- increase the proportion of good teaching and learning and raise expectations
- develop the use of assessment, including marking, data and tracking, to accelerate pupils' rates of progress.

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 and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Rigorous and systematic tracking now ensures that underachievement is responded to promptly. Teachers evaluate pupils' work more accurately against National Curriculum levels and pupils are involved in setting and reviewing their own personal targets. The marking of work generally combines encouragement with guidance on how to improve, which pupils say they appreciate. It is not, however, always clear that such guidance is followed up to consolidate pupils' learning. Nonetheless, although levels of attainment remain low, monitoring by the local authority and the



school's tracking of pupils' progress show satisfactory improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.

While many children enter the Reception class with poor language and communication development, detailed observation and recording of progress show that they are responding well to opportunities to be imaginative, make decisions, solve practical problems collaboratively and explain what they what they have learnt and want to learn. Their improved progress indicates that they will enter Key Stage 1 better prepared than in the past. In Key Stages 1 and 2, an updated choice of books is encouraging pupils to read, especially boys. Pupils' presentation of work is improving, but their writing reflects poor literacy skills and a limited range of expression. There is little evidence of extended and creative writing.

One-to-one tuition in literacy and numeracy is building confidence and skills for those pupils needing additional support. Lessons are more carefully matched to most pupils' current knowledge and skills. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution, generally working effectively with less able or less confident pupils. Progress on raising teachers' expectations is satisfactory, although the most able pupils are not always offered appropriate challenge or the opportunity to work independently and develop higher-order thinking.

Satisfactory progress has been made in strengthening the monitoring of teaching. Teachers draw up action plans to tackle areas for development identified in lesson observations, taking advantage of coaching and relevant training offered by the local authority and by the most effective staff within the school. The quality of teaching is uneven but the proportion that is good or better has increased. Amongst the strengths seen were secure subject knowledge, a positive rapport with pupils, lively pace, productive questioning skills and a confident use of appropriate technology. In less effective lessons, too long was spent on some activities, so that pupils' concentration flagged. On occasion, opportunities to extend pupils' learning were missed because pupils' initial responses went unchallenged. Whilst all staff clearly share the ambitious vision vigorously communicated by the headteacher and senior managers, not all consistently translate that into their expectations of pupils across the ability range.

The local authority's statement of action has provided a good basis for improvement, with consultancy, staff development and resources contributing significantly to the strengthening of provision and raising of standards. The School Improvement Partner has been a most effective 'critical friend'.

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

Patricia Metham
Her Majesty's Inspector

