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Mrs R Bruce
Headteacher
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Manchester Road
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Dear Mrs Bruce,

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 November 2009 to look at work to overcome pupils' socio-economic barriers to attain or exceed nationally expected levels for their age in literacy.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included discussions with senior leaders, middle managers and parents. I also visited seven lessons; three of these were intervention activities with small groups of pupils and one was with a group of parents. I interviewed pupils and scrutinised the school's assessment data and documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's engagement with parents is a considerable strength and helps to raise pupils' achievement. Parents speak of their involvement with the school making an 'amazing difference in their relationships with their child'. The well-organised parent liaison coordinator is adept at identifying opportunities to expand the already wide range of courses provided by the school. Parents from all of the diverse cultural and ethnic groups within the local community attend these sessions. The coordinator has taken action to encourage a greater proportion of fathers and male carers to attend.
- Teachers set high expectations by making good use of pupils' previous writing outcomes as exemplars. Teachers' questions and interventions,

borne from secure subject knowledge, develop pupils' writing skills well. For example, on one occasion, the class teacher explained that inserting an adjective would help the reader to be more sympathetic to the character in the story.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language respond well to stimulating and enjoyable lessons and make rapid progress. Characterised by good planning and high levels of organisation, lessons draw on a range of resources featuring puppets, computers and visual prompts. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge is used in a carefully planned sequence to reinforce the learning of new language skills.

Areas for development

- Increase the opportunities for extending pupils' speaking and listening skills by making greater use of talking partners.
- Direct more questions at specific pupils to ensure that all have the opportunity and the encouragement to respond and develop their understanding.
- Further refine assessment materials to provide clear indicators of the effectiveness of the teaching of phonics. Ensure that all those involved in providing the phonics programme, particularly teaching assistants, are trained regularly.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop literacy learning in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector