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Mrs K Bailey
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bailey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I, with Beryl Richmond, inspected your school on 27 January 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to pupils and staff who gave up their time to speak to us.

Since the previous inspection some staff, including a deputy headteacher, have left. The senior leadership has been re-structured as the Governors were unable to appoint a deputy headteacher.

As a result of the inspection on 13 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure that teaching consistently challenges all groups of pupils so that they make at least good progress in literacy, especially those from Black African heritages and those pupils who have learning difficulties
- ensure all curriculum coordinators are fully accountable for their contribution to quickening pupils' progress and linking learning in different subjects.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment has been uneven. Following a dip, standards are improving and the school's much improved tracking data indicate that in 2010 its targets are likely to be met. This was not the case in 2009, especially in Key Stage 2 where results suffered a fall in 2008 and did not pick up in 2009, with mathematics falling even further. In Key Stage 1, despite overall improvement from



2008, standards were below average in reading and in mathematics. In writing, the gap has been closing, with results nearing the national average.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage there has been good progress in raising outcomes for pupils. By 2009 these were approaching the national average in some areas. Good relationships between adults and children mean that children learn in a friendly, caring environment. However, there are barriers to further improvement. There are missed opportunities for children to develop skills of independence because teachers often instruct children on what to do rather than allow them to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions. Planning takes insufficient account of the different needs of children and so some do not make the progress of which they are capable. Links with parents and carers are good because the school plans sessions to explain the importance of play and how to support reading at home. These sessions are supported by translators.

Across the school, the quality of teaching remains satisfactory overall. There is now robust monitoring of the quality of lessons and teachers are now clear regarding the need to focus each lesson on pupil progress. The school's effective work in engaging with parents and the local community has established a culture where pupils enjoy being at school. This in turn creates a very positive learning environment where, as one tours the school, one finds orderly classrooms with pupils engrossed in their work. Last term's training and feedback from lesson monitoring is having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching. Teaching observed by inspectors was never less than satisfactory. Children in Year 6 reported that this year teachers have given them confidence to admit when they find things difficult and they say that teachers are very helpful in and out of lessons.

The use of assessment to ensure that work is pitched to give pupils the right level of challenge or support is at an early stage of development. Pupils respond well to instructions by teachers but throughout the school have too little opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, pupil progress is not as good as it could be.

Planning for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved and teaching assistants have been trained to deliver the small group interventions seen around the school. Data for 2009 shows that overall these pupils made slightly better progress than similar pupils nationally. The achievement of pupils of Black African heritage was singled out as an area for improvement at the last inspection. The school has focused on this and its work with raising the achievement of Somali pupils was used by the local authority as a case study of good practice. The local authority has worked with the school to raise attendance and has helped the school to implement and moderate its phonics programme.

Middle leaders such as subject coordinators now have a much enhanced role. They recognise their responsibility for achievement in their area and have been given time to work with colleagues in planning and delivery. This, and their improved use of



data, has led to more discussion about raising expectations and a shared vision. In this area there has been good progress.

The school has faced unexpected challenges since the last inspection, especially affecting Key Stage 2. There is evidence to suggest it has turned the corner and standards are beginning to rise. The implementation of several initiatives such as the more rigorous use of assessment data with teachers, the engagement with parents and carers to promote pupil progress, the further improvement in behaviour and attendance and the Healthy, Extended and International School awards, show that there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector

