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Mrs E Mullins
Acting Headteacher
Bedford Drive Primary School
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Merseyside
CH42 6RT

Dear Mrs Mullins

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

I would like to thank you, Miss Thomson and your other colleagues for the help given to me when I inspected your school on 09 March 2010, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 April 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve standards and achievement, especially in mathematics
- ensure that teaching and learning are of consistently good quality
- make better use of targets to boost pupils' achievement.

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

The last inspection showed that standards were below average and the national test results in 2009 confirmed this situation. Since the inspection, a concerted effort has been made to raise standards. Its positive impact was clear in the lessons I observed in both English and mathematics: pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, were reaching higher standards and making better progress than was the case two years ago. The school's detailed assessment data show a notable increase in the proportion of pupils who are reaching the standards expected for their ages in English and mathematics. The beneficial impact of the school's drive to improve pupils' calculation skills in mathematics was evident. After a coherent training and development programme in the use of assessment,



staff are much clearer about how well each pupil and class are doing, and also about the precise nature of the standards pupils should be reaching in the core subjects. Aided by careful use of good assessment data, they are in a stronger position to identify and rectify pupils' underachievement; a strengthened range of intervention strategies supports this. Staff take more responsibility for the progress made by pupils in their charge. This is well supported by the strengthening of the school's tracking procedures, the regular meetings about pupils' progress, the system used for performance management and the training and support given to staff by senior leaders and external advisers. Training has helped improve the consistency of teaching and, in the lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Leadership of the core subjects has been strengthened in both English and mathematics. The school has improved substantially the quality of the learning environment and the use of teaching materials. All of this supports the overall improvement in achievement. Though this is clear and substantial, it remains work in progress and time is now needed for the full impact of the school's efforts to show in forthcoming national tests.

Action to improve the consistency of teaching and learning has been beneficial. With strong support from the local authority, the school has improved its procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and comparing it to the levels expected in the National Curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is now routinely evaluated using explicit criteria. Staff are clearer about the nature of effective teaching and learning. The refurbished classrooms provide a better basis for teachers to organise and manage their resources and the curriculum continues to be of considerable interest to pupils. The lessons seen were characterised by: enthusiastic and committed teachers and assistants; clarity about what pupils were expected to learn; effective use of assessment to determine the levels of challenge to be set for different groups of pupils; interesting tasks set within lively topics; pupils behaving well and showing obvious motivation to learn; and a high level of consistency in the ways in which pupils were managed.

Within an improved and better coordinated system for assessment of pupils, teachers are making better use of targets to focus more sharply pupils' learning activities. Regular and detailed marking and the close observation of pupils' learning are giving teachers a clearer idea of the progress being made. Tracking is being used more effectively to gauge progress and detect, and then deal with, underperformance. Targets for each pupil are clear, specific and visible on wall displays and in pupils' work. Pupils, especially the older ones, understand them and take them seriously. They are increasingly clear about what 'good work' looks like. Teaching in the lessons seen was effective at setting the right levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities.

The school has been adept at seeking effective external support. The local authority has provided timely and effective support, based upon its clear and detailed review of the school's needs, discussion with school leaders and governors and its

deployment of specialist advisers and consultants. The guidance given has been well assimilated by the school's staff.

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

Peter Toft
Her Majesty's Inspector