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Mrs Louise Smith
Ingrow Primary School
Broomhill Avenue
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Dear Mrs Smith

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave Joy Law, Her Majesty's Inspector and me when we inspected your school on 27 May 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. We also welcomed the opportunity to talk with other members of staff, pupils and the School Improvement Partner. Please pass on our thanks to all those involved.

Since the last inspection the school has faced exceptionally challenging circumstances arising from staffing difficulties including the long-term absence of the headteacher and deputy headteacher owing to ill-health. The headteacher left the school in December 2009 and there have been several changes in teaching and support staff since that date. The local authority arranged for an executive headteacher from a nearby successful school to work in the school from March 2009 on a part-time basis.

In January 2010, the deputy headteacher became the head of the school. The school became part of a hard federation with Long Lee Primary School on 19 April 2010. The two schools have separate budgets and retain their separate status but have a federated governing body and shared leadership and management arrangements. The executive headteacher has been appointed on a permanent basis to lead both schools. An assistant headteacher was appointed in early May 2010. Pupil numbers, which had been declining for a number of years, have now stabilised and the enrolments for September 2010 are in line with the school's capacity.

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

- ensure that standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 represent at least good achievement for pupils
- improve teaching for all groups of pupils, to at least good levels, especially in relation to the pace of learning and teachers' expectations of pupils
- work more closely with some parents to raise levels of attendance overall
- improve provision for outside learning in Reception.

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, which had remained well below nationally expected levels since 2005, took a massive dip and declined further in 2008. In 2009, writing did not improve but attainment in reading and mathematics rose significantly to reach broadly average levels at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, while attainment remained below national benchmarks, it rose rapidly. More pupils reached the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science than in previous years because they had made the expected two levels of progress.

The school's analysis of its most recent data shows that at the end of the current academic year the school will reach floor targets for the first time in nine years. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010 looks set to be broadly average. This represents good progress in reading, writing and mathematics for most pupils at the end of Year 2 given their starting points. Similarly, pupils in the current Year 6 have made good and sometimes outstanding progress in the past year. Recent accurate teacher assessments indicate that attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. This signals significant improvements in all three subjects and, in particular in English, and the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 5.

The proportion of good or better lessons has increased substantially as a result of well-targeted actions and development activities for teachers, including peer support from colleagues in the federated school. Teachers work very hard to develop good relationships with pupils. Where tasks and activities are most clearly having a positive impact, teachers' expectations are high and opportunities for pupils to be independent learners are well established. Target-setting and assessment information are increasingly being used to inform lesson planning. This ensures that new learning builds more effectively on previous knowledge and skills. Consequently, pupils' progress in lessons is accelerating and the standard of pupils' work, especially their writing, is rising as a result. Teachers' feedback and marking usually indicate clearly to pupils how they can improve further. Pupils are increasingly participating in

assessing their own work, although the school recognises that there is more to do to embed this routinely.

Excellent displays and 'learning walls' throughout the school establish a vibrant and imaginative learning environment and establish a very positive climate for learning. Pupils' individual targets are clearly displayed in their books and on classroom walls. A 'traffic light' system helps most pupils know their targets and what progress they are making. This boosts their self-confidence and enhances their enjoyment of learning because they gain a clearer sense of their own achievements. Pupils were very keen to show inspectors their own office and the outstanding range of play and learning opportunities available to them at lunchtimes. They talked with great pride about their active involvement in their own safety and well-being and reported that they feel happier and enjoy school because it has 'improved massively since joining the federation, lessons are fantastic, they are interesting and much more fun'.

These very positive changes alongside better relationships with parents and the implementation of well thought through strategies such as first day telephone calls, the introduction of a nurture group, and the work of the 'parent and community' team, for example, have resulted in pupils' good behaviour and brought overall attendance back to just below average levels. The very high rate of persistent absence seen in 2008 has been tackled vigorously and is now below the average for similar schools. Nonetheless, pupils' attendance in the current Year 2 and Year 5 remains lower than that found in the rest of the school. School leaders are currently investigating why this is the case so that they can target their actions at these classes and raise attendance further still.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, actions to improve the overall quality of provision are evident in the indoor areas. Assessments and observations are becoming increasingly accurate. As yet, this information is not used routinely to inform planning for learning and play. The outdoor learning provision is satisfactory but a lack of resources currently limits the opportunities for children in the Reception class in particular to explore, use their senses and be physically active. However, school leaders are aware of this and there are appropriate plans to ensure improvements are in place for the start of the coming academic year.

The good gains in pupils' enjoyment, attendance and progress and the school's upward trajectory of improvement are the direct result of the determined and decisive actions the executive headteacher and the head of school have taken to improve the quality of provision and accelerate the pace of learning. Performance management of all aspects of the school's work has been strengthened. Staffing difficulties have been tackled head on so that there is now a stable staff team in place. Data and information from the school's own monitoring are generally being used well to eliminate underachievement and target actions more precisely; as testified by the significant improvements in progress this year. The new leadership team has gained a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school and has established a greater awareness among staff of the next

steps required to raise standards further. All of which bodes well for further sustained improvement.

Support from the local authority throughout the last year has been good and highly effective in helping the school implement the actions needed to tackle the areas for 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

Wendy Ripley
Her Majesty's Inspector