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Mr A Joy  
St Philip's CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mr Joy

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 July 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass my thanks to the pupils, staff and governors who met with me.

The characteristics of the school are much the same as at the time of the previous inspection in July 2008 although the number of pupils on roll has fallen slightly and is now 264. As a result of that inspection the school was asked to:

- raise standards and improve achievement in writing and mathematics
- ensure that all planning reflects high expectations of pupils and builds effectively on their prior learning
- build the capacity of all staff to use assessment data to set challenging targets, both at whole-school and at a personal level for individual pupils
- refine school development planning to ensure it is clearly focused on key whole-school priorities.

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.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen from below average at the time of the inspection in 2008. Test results in 2009 for pupils in Year 6 were above the national average overall. These results showed that, as a group, the Year 6 pupils made good progress in Years 3 to 6. The school's own assessments for current Year 6 pupils



show that the rising trend in attainment is being maintained. Standards at the end of Year 2 dipped but are now rising. Pupils' progress has been speeded up and is now good in many lessons and parts of the school but not consistently so. With some exceptions, pupils are now achieving well. Current work shows that pupils' skills in writing and mathematics are being developed securely and systematically. Moreover, the skills are being routinely applied across the curriculum in the well-planned projects or interesting topics being studied; this is particularly true for writing skills, and more applications are being planned for mathematics.

Lessons are planned to ensure tasks set are suitably challenging given pupils' existing knowledge. Most teaching seen on this visit was good; this is an improvement. In most lessons, good questioning and other forms of checking by teachers spur learning on effectively. Pupils refer to the targets set for literacy and numeracy and talk about what specific skills they are aiming to acquire. They are attentive and enthusiastic because activities are mostly very engaging. Pupils speak positively about the enriching events the school provides; many are captured in the rich displays around the school. Reception children and other pupils showed much excitement about the newly hatched chicks.

Good work has taken place to enhance the school's systems for assessment. The school has set ambitious but achievable targets. Class teachers keep assessment files very efficiently. They have a good understanding of what progress is expected from pupils and of what needs to be done to support each one to reach their targets. Reviews of pupils' progress are undertaken three times a year by the headteacher in discussion with class teachers; systems of accountability are clear. Staff speak of their increased use of data to raise pupils' achievements.

The school development plan is a useful document and sets out clearly the school's actions for improvement over just one academic year. Priorities in the most recent plan have been the right ones. The improved outcomes for pupils in relation to their writing are one example of the positive impact of actions taken; improved use of assessment and increased creativity and relevance in the curriculum are two more. While long-term development objectives are summarised in the plan, the timescales and sequencing are unclear. The senior staff and governors are aware that the setting out of a longer term development plan is of benefit, especially at a time when the school has a budget recovery plan, agreed with the local authority.

The local authority has supported the school well and now views the school as having good capacity to sustain further improvement. This inspection bears out that view. There are strengths in leadership, management and teaching. Governors have grown in effectiveness and have put into place appropriate systems for keeping the school under review and for supporting staff in their work. The impact of the work of staff and governors can be seen in the improved provision and outcomes for pupils and in their enjoyment of school.



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

Wiola Hola  
Her Majesty's Inspector

