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Mr P Johnson
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Johnson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 November 2009 and for the information that you provided before and during my visit. In particular, please pass on my thanks to Liz Baldwin (deputy headteacher), Michelle Marum (mathematics manager), Joy Preston (chair of governors) and the group of pupils that met with me to share their perspective of the school.

Since the last inspection there have been two new teaching appointments. Links with the infant school have become significantly stronger and this is having a positive impact on transition between Years 2 and 3.

As a result of the inspection on 10 and 11 January 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that improvements in mathematics are fully and successfully implemented to raise standards and achievement
- make better use of assessments to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs and achievement of all pupils increased
- improve marking and individual targets for learning so that they clearly show all pupils how they can achieve more.

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.

National test results at the end of Year 6 remained below average last year, but had improved slightly on the previous year. The school was rightly disappointed with these results as they tended to contradict the school's own assessment of pupils' progress and achievement. The school has collected a considerable amount of

secure evidence that has been externally and internally validated to demonstrate that progress and achievement were better than indicated in national tests. Since the last inspection, a considerable amount has been done to raise standards in mathematics, not least with regard to improving pupils' basic number skills. Senior staff have rigorously monitored the planning, teaching and assessment of pupils' work in mathematics. They have accurately identified areas for staff training to secure further improvements in standards and achievement. The school's own tracking evidence shows that almost all pupils made one sub level of progress last year. Most of the pupils in the older groups made two sub levels of progress. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that standards in mathematics throughout the school have risen since September. However, the school has recognised that the pace of improvement needs to be quicker. In order to achieve this, teachers are introducing a new mathematics curriculum. Early indications show this is beginning to have a positive impact on progress and achievement throughout the school. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing the first issue from the last inspection. The pace of achieving positive outcomes, whilst better than suggested by national test results, is still too slow.

Satisfactory progress has been made in ensuring that better use is made of assessment information to match teaching to the needs of different groups of pupils. There is evidence that the strategies introduced over the past eighteen months are beginning to improve outcomes throughout the school, especially in English. However, this has yet to make a sufficiently positive impact on national tests results by the end of Year 6. Teachers are making better use of assessment data to plan lessons with learning objectives that are designed to meet pupils' needs. As a result, no inadequate teaching was seen during the visit and the majority of lessons were good. The progress that pupils make during lessons is generally good because teachers are accurately assessing pupils' ongoing needs through careful observation and questioning. This is more evident in English lessons than in mathematics. In English, the setting of groups according to ability throughout the school is having a positive impact on raising standards. In mathematics, however, the school recognises that systems to ensure that teaching matches pupils' needs and abilities are less effective because a recently introduced mathematics scheme is not yet fully embedded.

Good progress has been made in improving marking and target setting. Effective policies are consistently applied throughout the school to ensure that marking provides helpful guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers model good handwriting and have high expectations with regard to the presentation of pupils' work. Teachers' written comments are evaluative and make it clear when targets have been achieved. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets. This is well developed in English where pupils are aware of not only their long-term targets, but also the specific learning that needs to be embedded before they can achieve them. Pupils are less clear about what they need to do to achieve their targets in mathematics. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their

own work and this is helping them take more active responsibility for their own learning.

The school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement because of the good quality of leadership and management at all levels. There has been a united ambition to drive up improvement since the last inspection. Highly effective monitoring systems have resulted in the accurate identification of weaker areas of provision and the implementation of rigorous actions (including well-focused staff training) to address these. Follow-up monitoring has demonstrated that these actions have been successful and the very good communications and relationships throughout the school mean that staff and governors are fully aware of the school's successes and challenges. There is secure evidence that improvement strategies are starting to show positive outcomes, although the school recognises that the pace of improvement needs to increase.

The local authority has provided good support to the school through the provision of effective monitoring and training, which is starting to have a significant impact on raising standards, and through the use of advisory teachers to support teaching and learning, especially in mathematics.

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

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector