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Mrs Susan Harris
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Harris

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 9 February 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the staff and pupils for their help.

There have been a variety of changes since the last inspection. Four full-time teachers and one part-time teacher have been appointed as replacements to staff who have left. The deputy headteacher has recently returned from long-term sick leave following an accident. The vice-chair of governors has been made Chair. Teaching groups have been reorganised and each class is taught by a team of two teachers and several teaching assistants. Rebuilding and remodelling work has been completed and complemented by landscaping to the grounds which includes a conservation area as well as enhanced play facilities. The school has very recently become part of Rushmoor Children's Partnership in a soft federation with local schools and services.

As a result of the inspection on 7 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement in English by providing more opportunities for reading to adults and writing practice
- improve the use of assessment in planning teaching and learning, and in setting targets so pupils understand how to reach their next goals
- ensure that the systems to monitor and evaluate teachers' use of assessment are robust and applied with rigour so that they lead to faster progress and higher standards.



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.

Pupils' achievement has been improved since the last inspection. Strengths identified in pupils' personal development, attitudes, behaviour and capacity to work and play amicably with each other have been built upon. Pupils continue to enjoy learning and this has been further enhanced as a result of a review of the curriculum designed to promote a more hands-on and investigative approach.

In 2009, attainment for Year 2 pupils, notwithstanding those in the year group who were supported through the special educational needs resourced-based provision, was broadly average in reading and mathematics. This was a marked improvement over the previous year when attainment was significantly below average. It is too soon to say that this is the start of a marked upward trend. School predictions for the current Year 2 suggest that this year's performance will not be as good. Some potentially more able pupils are likely to fall short of higher levels, especially in writing and mathematics. However, the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs goes some way to explaining the anticipated lower profile.

School records and direct observation during this monitoring visit indicate that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in terms of sub-levels of the National Curriculum. Rates of progress are picking up as staff make more effective use of assessment information, as required by the last report. The school feels confident enough to have moved the central focus from literacy, which was begun after the last inspection, to mathematics. This decision was made following much improved, detailed analysis of the school's own data, which are now well collated and presented. Improving pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is a legitimate aim. However, continuing to forge improvements in English, especially more able pupils' writing, should remain a priority, in order to ensure pupils do not underachieve, and consequently drive up the overall profile of attainment.

A concerted effort is under way to make the most of information gleaned from the recently embedded systems for assessing and evaluating pupils' progress. This underpins the school's secure capacity to sustain improvement and represents good progress. Teachers are in a much better position to plan meaningful and relevant work pitched at pupils' ability. Staff now make reference to what pupils already know, can do and understand in curriculum and lesson planning. Pupils are aware of class, group and individual targets in reading and writing and a start has been made in Year 2 to extend this into mathematics. Senior managers' monitoring is effective and has resulted in the quality of teaching and learning being improved to at least satisfactory and often good. There are very positive features in the way staff use



questioning to challenge pupils to answer on the basis of reasoning. Good Early Years Foundation Stage practice, which encourages children to learn through first-hand experience, is being built upon in Years 1 and 2. Learning is obviously fun. Maths Week number investigations successfully involved pupils throughout the school in identifying and developing their own strategies as well as making learning fun.

The school benefits from the effective support of the local authority. The School Improvement Partner has given good advice which has enhanced monitoring, self-evaluation and forward planning. The quality of Pinewood's Early Years Foundation Stage provision has been recognised and is used as an example of good practice for staff from other schools. The growing partnership with schools in the soft federation successfully supports curriculum planning and joint moderation to ensure consistency in teachers' assessments.

As a result of a better structure for monitoring, senior leaders and governors have a clear view of the school's and pupils' performance and this forms the basis of accurate self-evaluation. Detailed records of assessment are analysed by the staff as a team and this contributes to a collective awareness of strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong determination to make improvements and decisions are beginning to be evaluated in terms of impact on pupils' learning. Drawing all teachers into the process in order to set targets for whole-school improvement already forms part of the development plan. This is an indication of better leadership and management and a further indication of a growing capacity for improvement. The school is on the right lines.

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

Mike Burghart
Additional inspector

