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14 May 2010

Mr R Thornhill  
 Executive headteacher  
 Kings Avenue School  
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Dear Mr Thornhill

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when my colleague and I inspected your school on 5 May 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the chair of governors, the staff and pupils and thank you for organising our programme of visits and discussions.

Since the last inspection, there have been some contextual changes. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen to around half the school population. There have been considerable numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the normal times during the past two years. The school has well-advanced plans to reduce its intake from a three-form entry school to just two forms of entry from September 2010. The Nursery is housed in buildings a short distance from the school, but will be moving to within the main school site also from September.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 May 2010, the school was asked to:

- raise the quality of teaching
- improve pupils' behaviour so it is consistently good
- work with parents to help raise attendance levels.

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.

Senior leaders have built upon their emerging success recognised in the last inspection report. The federation arrangements are working well. The executive headteacher, supported by the head of school and vice principals, has remedied many of the key weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Pupils'



progress is tracked and analysed regularly so the school has a very clear view of which year groups and pupils need support. Any weaknesses are highlighted and clear links are made to improving the quality of teaching where necessary. Intervention support for specific groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, means they keep up with classmates and their national counterparts.

Children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are significantly below the levels expected nationally. They continue to make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As they move through the school, accelerating progress is helping pupils get nearer to those attainment levels expected for their age, particularly in Year 2. The school is expecting pupils in Year 6 to reach the highest levels in national tests that have been achieved for a significant time. In lessons, pupils' work reflects this improving trend, particularly in Year 2 and in mathematics and science in Year 6. Writing still varies in quality, hampered by pupils' inconsistency and accuracy of spelling.

An increased focus on encouraging good behaviour has succeeded in pupils being ready to work and play together more willingly and productively. A clear system of rewards and sanctions, which pupils had some influence in deciding, is appreciated by them. While there are still isolated incidents of disruptive or boisterous behaviour, this is firmly on the decline. As a result, playtimes provide good opportunities for pupils to play a range of team games, which helps boost their activity levels and foster their levels of cooperation.

Lessons sampled during the inspection indicated that the quality and consistency of teaching have improved so a greater proportion of lessons are well taught. This is helping improve pupils' rates of progress as reduced incidents of disruption are having a positive impact on their willingness to learn. Where teachers do not demand enough of pupils, particularly those who are more able, their learning slows. In some activities, not enough links are made between the skills being taught and their practical everyday application. Work is regularly marked with positive comments to point out improvement.

Leadership and management roles had just been reviewed before the last inspection in the light of the transition to a 'soft' federation with two other primary schools overseen by an executive headteacher. The senior leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, especially for pupils' learning, progress, pastoral care and the importance of attendance. Systematic monitoring of teaching and clear systems to encourage pupils' good behaviour have become embedded since the last inspection, reflecting an increased capacity to improve. Regular meetings with parents to discuss issues around irregular or non-attendance have resulted in improving levels of attendance which are closer to the average levels. Support from external agencies has been marshalled effectively to help improve teaching quality and in providing support for families who find it difficult to send their children to school regularly. Productive links with partner schools in the

federation have helped broaden the expertise and experience of staff. Improvement planning indicates that the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development and senior leaders recognise that more work remains to be done to further accelerate pupils' progress and consolidate rising levels of attainment through the school.

The local authority provides good support which has been welcomed by the school. The impact of this has enabled the school to focus well on addressing the key points from the last inspection and to keep a focus on learning and achievement, especially in core subjects. During the inspection, safeguarding procedures were checked and found to meet the latest requirements.

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

Kevin Hodge

Additional inspector