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Mr Ian Cording
Headteacher
Whitleigh Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Cording

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 March 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please would you pass on my thanks to your Chair of the Governing Body, the representative from the local authority and the group of pupils I met with.

As a result of the inspection on 11 November 2009, the school was asked to:

- accelerate pupils' progress so that by the time of the Year 6 national tests in 2010, 67% of pupils have made two levels of progress in English since the end of Year 2 and 68% have achieved this in mathematics
- improve the quality of teaching to the level of the best by ensuring that all staff enable pupils' learning to progress rapidly at all times and structure activities more effectively when pupils are working in groups
- ensure that safeguarding procedures meet the requirements to demonstrate that all new staff appointed since 2006 have been appropriately vetted.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the last inspection the school has continued its determined focus on improvement to tackle the historic weaknesses of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher effectively lead an enthusiastic team who are ambitious for the school and the children. Pupils behave well and feel safe. They enjoy school, know their individual targets and know what helps them to improve their work.



The school's rigorous assessment processes and data analysis show that pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet the target set at the last inspection. Pupils in other year groups, particularly Year 3 and Year 4, are also making better progress. The school has correctly identified that Year 5 pupils require more help to secure two levels of progress by the end of Year 6 and have appropriate plans in place to raise the achievement of this year group. Progress across the school is most secure in reading and less so in writing, which remains an ongoing focus for improvement.

Regular monitoring of teaching by the leadership team and the local authority concludes that teaching across the school has improved since the last inspection. During the visit strengths were observed in all lessons. Good relationships between pupils and adults and effective behaviour management means that the atmosphere is conducive to learning. There is now a clear structure to all the lessons and different work is provided for different groups of pupils. Classrooms are well organised with displays designed to help pupils to improve. Effective use is made of additional adults. Pupils work diligently, and on occasions are very enthusiastic. However, in most lessons observed there is not enough account taken of pupils' prior learning so that this can be built upon quickly or misconceptions challenged. There is still a lack of clarity in lessons as to what pupils need to learn next in order to make good progress. Too long is spent rehearsing what pupils already know. Questioning is not sufficiently challenging. At times, the pace is too slow. The school has worked hard to improve many elements of its practice, most recently supporting teachers in their use of data, analysing planning in depth, integrating key skills and working on mental-oral starters in the mathematics lessons. The leadership team is aware that it must now ensure that these initiatives are consistently leading to improved learning and progress for pupils in day-to-day teaching and plans are already in place to monitor this thoroughly.

The school's safeguarding records now demonstrate that all new staff appointed since 2006 have been appropriately vetted. There are good systems now in place to update records when necessary. As part of a campus, the school has put in place safeguarding procedures to ensure that the staff of its partner schools, centres and contractors are also vetted. It is important that these procedures are now regularly and systematically carried out.

The local authority's statement of action to support the school fulfils requirements. The school has received a great deal of support from the local authority, including consultants focusing on improving teaching and learning and advisor involvement to offer ongoing monitoring and challenge. This has been effective and there is a shared and accurate view of the progress the school has made and what it still needs to do. Appropriately, the local authority is working with the school so that there is increased capacity to direct its own improvement. The success of this work is clearly evident in the development of strong middle leaders. A review of the campus governing body has recently taken place and this is an important step to ensure that governors, who are committed, have the knowledge and capacity to challenge and support the primary school appropriately. The school is also



considering other initiatives with its campus partners to improve its provision further. This is appropriate so that the school's capacity is further enhanced and the additional opportunities that being part of a campus offers are used to support Whitleigh Primary School in its ongoing journey of 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

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector