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Ms Kath Conwell
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Conwell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Adswood Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday, 28 September 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please could you pass on my thanks to the gifted and talented pupils I spoke to, the Chair of the Governing Body and to the group of parents and carers who gave up their time to speak to me on the morning of the inspection.

Since the last inspection, the Adswood Nursery on the same site as the school has closed and, from September 2010, the school has opened a Nursery class using the same building previously occupied by the Nursery.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 January 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Results from the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 2009 and for 2010 show a good level of improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4, the expected standard for 11-year-olds. The improvement in mathematics noted in the last inspection has been sustained. Pupils' progress is now such that, allowing for year-to-year differences between cohorts, standards are at least average.

The school has consolidated its system of assessing the levels at which pupils are working. In all classes, teachers and pupils are well aware of their levels and what is required to reach the next one. This is particularly evident with older and more-able pupils, where such information is helping raise their aspirations of what they might achieve. Information from assessments informs senior managers of pupils' progress and this information is now being used very rigorously to monitor the work of the school. It is also used effectively to determine whether interventions are required to help pupils who appear to be falling behind. This tracking system reveals that pupils are now making accelerated progress in the upper half of the school, as much as two years' progress in one year in some classes.

The school is very focused on accelerating progress in pupils' basic skills. However, the success of its drive to accelerate progress and raise standards is raising an issue for the youngest pupils. Children continue to enter the school with very low levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Despite making good progress in Reception, a substantial minority of children enter Year 1 without having attained the levels of development desirable before beginning the National Curriculum. The school recognises that such children should continue to have access in Key Stage 1 to an early years curriculum suited to their learning needs. Accommodating an extension to the Early Years Foundation Stage is, potentially, at odds with the school's drive to ensure that all pupils make accelerated progress during Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is investigating ways of supporting young learners while making sure the demands on older pupils to make accelerated progress in later years are not too high.

Teaching has improved. Nearly all the teaching observed was of good quality. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers praise pupils frequently, which promotes an ethos of success in assemblies and lessons and raises pupils' self-esteem. Teaching is highly focused on matching work to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Teaching assistants play an effective role in teaching and learning as they work with specific groups. Staff work well as a coherent team with consistent approaches to teaching. For example, the same approaches to displaying lesson objectives for each group and of providing helpful displays on literacy and numeracy are to be found in each class. Pupils' behaviour continues to be good and attendance is much improved.

The school's position and regard within the community, a strength recognised within the last inspection, continues to draw the admiration of parents and carers. They provide evidence that in raising the standards and horizons for pupils, the community as a whole is empowered. Parents and carers were at pains to explain how the school's support for its pupils is extended to them and the positive impact this has on their lives. The local authority provides good support to the school. The school is well resourced to meet the considerable challenges it faces in raising standards. Very good links exist between the school and agencies of the local authority's children's services, so the school calls on expertise beyond that which it can itself provide.

There is now a proven track record of sustained improvement. In opening a Nursery class the school is extending its reach to younger children and their families and opening the way to closer dialogue with the on-site children's centre. The drive and vision of the headteacher, governors and senior staff to improve the lives of pupils, families and the community, recognised in the last inspection, are unabated. The staff work as a highly cohesive team that fully embraces what the leaders are seeking to achieve for their pupils. The school is now, therefore, in the strongest possible position to sustain improvement despite the considerable challenges it faces.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2008

- Accelerate rates of pupils' progress so that they reach at least average standards.
- Make use of accurate assessments to set challenging targets for pupils, particularly the more able.
- Increase the proportion of consistently good or better teaching throughout the school.