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26 January 2011

Headteacher  
Brookside Junior School  
Dagnam Park Drive  
Harold Hill  
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Dear Mrs Collins

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Brookside Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 January 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussion, pre-inspection meeting and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would be grateful if you could also thank members of staff and the Chair of the Governing Body.

There have been no significant changes to the school context since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 5-6 November 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:

satisfactory progress in making improvements

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Overall, attainment has risen over time despite a slight dip in 2010; this dip mirrored the national picture. Improvements in mathematics were sustained, but in English, attainment in 2010 was not quite at the level of 2009. The school's own tracking data shows that attainment is set to rally in 2011 and to rise again in 2012. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest level of attainment is still not



high enough and significantly below that achieved nationally. The school is aware of this and has introduced steps to assure additional challenge through teachers' planning. Evidence from brief visits to some lessons and from school tracking data indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their below average starting points. Performance data demonstrate progress to be steadily improving over time and to be no longer significantly below that expected.

The provision for lower attaining pupils has improved. In the majority of lessons, learning support assistants are promoting more independent learning. This is because the school has put a good programme of training in place to ensure that learning support assistants do not lead pupils too readily to the answers. Their questioning prompts pupils to think more for themselves and discourages reliance on the adult support. There are still a few occasions where assistants are overly dominant but the school is aware of this and is taking clear action to support those who need it. Independence has also been enhanced by the introduction of more practical approaches to learning through the use of apparatus and materials which enable less able pupils to manage their own work. This promotes better assessment and small steps of progress are built upon successfully through tasks which are better matched to individuals' abilities and needs. Learning support assistants are generally well directed by teachers and understand their role in the classroom.

The school has worked hard to develop greater in-house specialist knowledge about those pupils with specific educational needs. The inclusion manager has developed her own expertise by attending relevant courses and then cascading new initiatives and ideas to all staff. In addition, the school has been proactive in seeking the help and advice it needs from a variety of sources. As a result, learning support assistants have been trained in 'precision teaching', relevant staff have received specific training in 'autistic needs' and those pupils with speech and language needs have received improved teaching and support. This has ensured improved progress for a significant number of pupils. Those few who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Following a review of the provision in the school, the proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities dropped significantly. This is because in the past, too many pupils fell behind as a result of less effective teaching and were labeled as having a special need. This is not now the case. New interventions and support mechanisms are currently being put into place but it is too early to judge the impact of these on standards of attainment.

Links with the infant school are improving and an action plan is now in place to ensure that more effective ways of working are implemented. Joint meetings and visits by staff to each other's schools are improving the exchange of information to enhance transition arrangements. In particular, the school has improved the transition for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, they settle in more quickly and their needs are more swiftly addressed. The school is aware that more work is necessary to ensure better use of assessment when pupils transfer from Year 2 to Year 3.



Improving progress in mathematics has been a challenge for the school but leaders and managers are making some headway. As a result, progress has improved but the improvements are modest and the accelerated progress required to eradicate past underachievement is not yet evident. This is because the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough either across the whole school or within year groups. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can do or achieve. This is particularly the case for the most able who sometimes spend too long marking time while they repeat work they can already do. Teachers' assessment does not always ensure that work is pitched at the correct starting point for all learners. Teachers' questioning is variable. In some classes teachers ask good open questions which promote pupils' thinking skills but in others questions serve only to elicit right or wrong answers. In addition, teachers' written feedback and marking do not identify the next steps for learning often enough. Pupils do not consistently understand what they need to do to improve their work. School self-evaluation has correctly identified what actions to take and some have already been implemented. However, it is too early to gauge the impact on attainment and accelerating progress.

The implementation of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is at an early stage of development. However, the school is beginning to plan for this rather than it happening by chance. For example, in science, pupils use explanatory writing to record their work.

Behaviour in classes and around the school is good. Pupils are polite and respond well to their teachers. Leaders and managers have put new systems and procedures in place which have had a good impact on behaviour. For example, the new behaviour policy has been shared with pupils and their parents and the few pupils who require support to improve their behaviour are provided with a behaviour plan which sets clear targets and is monitored well. Leaders have been successful in ensuring that they respond to parental concerns and that parents feel more involved in developing systems to support better behaviour. This has ensured good progress since the last inspection in the area for improvement.

The leadership team works together to drive improvement. Monitoring and performance management systems are beginning to be more effective in ensuring that teachers are held to account for the progress that their pupils make. The school appreciates the valuable support the local authority provides, for instance through the work of consultants in mathematics and the support and challenge of the School Improvement Partner. The local authority is monitoring the school's work through its termly reviews. The school also benefits from the good support of the 'local leader of education'.

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



Glynis Bradley-Peat  
**Additional Inspector**



## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009

- Improve provision for lower attaining pupils by:
  - promoting more independent learning and tasks
  - developing greater in-house specialist knowledge about the specific educational needs of pupils in the school
  - extending links with the infant school to make more effective use of assessments of progress and standards of work when pupils transfer to Year 3
  - improving the progress pupils make in mathematics by ensuring that work is well matched to the needs of higher and lower attainers and by making more use of practical activities in lessons
  - providing pupils with regular opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
  
- Improve behaviour in the playground by:
  - developing a better system for logging incidents so that they can be tracked and addressed more effectively
  - involving parents in developing policies on behaviour management
  - developing mechanisms for feeding back to parents and pupils on how behaviour has been dealt with.