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1 December 2010  
Mrs Hopkins  
Headteacher  
Springdale Junior School  
Warstones Drive  
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Wolverhampton  
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Dear Mrs Hopkins

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Springdale Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 November 2010. I appreciate the time you gave to our phone discussions and to gathering the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass my thanks to the pupils for the time they gave to share their views with us.

Since the last inspection, an assistant headteacher has been appointed to oversee mathematics.

As a result of the inspection on 12–13 March 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.

The 2010 test results indicate an improvement in attainment. It is now broadly average, although a below average number of pupils gained level 5s in English. Outcomes are skewed by the resource base, which means that the school overall has about seven times the national average of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. These pupils are included well in the life of the school and make good progress because of the high levels of additional adult support they receive. The school's increasingly reliable data indicate that pupils of all abilities are making better progress throughout the school. In the lessons observed, lower and middle ability pupils made good progress but the most able pupils did less well because teaching did not fully meet their needs.



Teachers are now more regularly involved in moderation to increase the accuracy of assessments, although opportunities to work with the infant school on this have been limited. The work on letters and sounds has been particularly effective in plugging gaps in pupils' previous learning. The adoption of a reading scheme that is better matched to the needs of pupils is also improving the progress many make. Pupils say they find lessons more challenging and particularly value opportunities to undertake work associated with a higher year group.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and as a result their behaviour is good. Pupils are more actively involved in their learning because teachers ensure pupils appreciate the link between the lesson objective and their individual targets. Information and communication technology is used particularly well to maintain high levels of pupil engagement. For instance, a computer program was used to pose questions that required the application of mathematical thinking when calculating costs. Teachers are adopting strategies to ensure all pupils have to respond to questions, such as requiring the discussion of important responses in pairs. In the better lessons teachers pause occasionally to offer praise, review learning and consolidate pupils' understanding of their progress. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use the end of lessons to ensure pupils understood precisely why they had been successful in their learning, and any gaps that would need to be addressed in future lessons.

Different work is almost always set for the ability groups in lessons. However, there is not always sufficient choice; for instance, in mathematics pupils are not always able to concentrate on the questions they find most challenging. Teachers did not always fully tease out what the most able needed to do to demonstrate good rates of progress, for instance by identifying what might be needed to write a prize-winning newspaper story. Tasks for the most able were most effective when they required students to critically engage with the content. For instance, explaining precisely the strengths that made a story compelling. Marking almost always helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils involvement in self and peer assessment is increasing and this is improving their ability to take responsibility for improving their work, particularly where work is displayed to exemplify different levels of achievement.

More accurate, regular tracking of pupils' progress is at the heart of the improvements made to monitoring and evaluation. Leaders are holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make, and professional development is largely well matched to the needs of staff. Middle leaders are more involved in monitoring. Lessons are regularly observed and improvements are identified, although in considering the impact on pupils' progress not enough attention is given to different groups. The school is beginning to draw together a wide range of evidence relating to the outcomes for pupils with appropriate over-arching priorities for improvement. Steps are being taken to improve the information provided to governors about pupils' progress. The school is at an early stage in developing an approach to self-



review that links outcomes to provision, including a view of its current capacity for sustained improvement.

The impact of external support is good. For instance, local authority consultants have been instrumental in establishing the effective teaching of letters and sounds. The school has worked well with other local schools in developing approaches that increase pupils' motivation to write. The Black Country Challenge has supported the development of more effective arrangements to support pupils when they transfer to secondary schools. The School Improvement Partner is working hard in promoting better cross-phase liaison. Local authority reviews have assisted the school in promoting the more effective use of targets in the classroom.

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 Sheldrick  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Ensure accurate assessment information is used rigorously so all pupils, especially the more able, make at least good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve teachers' skills in involving pupils in all parts of the lesson, and in encouraging them to become independent learners.
- Ensure all those with leadership responsibility, including governors, have a realistic view of provision, carefully checking the impact of actions for improvement against pupils' standards and their achievement.

