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13 January 2011

Mrs J O'Hara  
Headteacher  
May Park Primary School  
Coombe Road  
Eastville  
Bristol  
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Dear Mrs O'Hara

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of May Park Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 January 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass my thanks on to the pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body with whom I held discussions.

As a result of the inspection on 16 to 17 September 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Although attainment across the school remains low overall, it is rising quickly. Progress rates are generally good and in 2010, the Year 6 results in the end of Key Stage 2 tests showed pupils had made significant gains to reach broadly average levels of attainment.

The school has taken positive and determined action to raise pupils' achievement. It has involved all staff in introducing a rigorous and effective system for assessing, tracking and analysing the progress of classes, year groups and vulnerable pupils. Assessments take place at the end of each half term. This process has enabled the school to identify pupils at risk of underachieving. Class teachers are held to account by senior leaders for the progress of their pupils. Learning support assistants have been well trained to play a key role in implementing the intervention strategies that



are now more closely tailored to pupils' needs. These are proving successful, especially the focused group work for reading and the booster classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school's data show accelerated progress for pupils capable of working at the higher levels and those who attend May Park for all their primary schooling. Achievement for minority ethnic groups is closely monitored and improving fast.

While there is a rising trend of attainment for older pupils, progress rates for younger pupils have been more variable over time and attainment remains low in Key Stage 1. Recognising this, the school has extended access to a play-based and language-rich curriculum into Year 1, particularly to support the high number of newly arrived pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. This initiative is now having a positive impact on the pupils' levels of engagement and oracy. The school is investigating how best to manage the later transition into the Year 1 basic-skills curriculum so that pupils can make accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics during the rest of their time in Years 1 and 2.

The senior leadership team has monitored teaching and learning rigorously, identified areas for improvement and worked alongside colleagues in a coaching role. This has brought about sharper planning for the specific needs of groups of pupils by gender, ethnicity and ability. Evidence from the monitoring visit, supported by the school's own monitoring, shows that teaching is typically good or better. Resources are used well to ensure that pupils engage in active learning. A creative curriculum ensures imaginative contexts for learning that relate to real life. For example, some Year 6 pupils were working in groups to tackle measurement challenges in mathematics and could talk confidently about how they might apply the skills and knowledge gained when cooking or shopping.

Teachers use data from marking and assessments to provide pupils with clear feedback on how well they are learning. This is being translated into curriculum targets which are shared with the pupils in ways that are most appropriate to their age and abilities. Pupils find the feedback they receive about their achievements helpful. They are given opportunities in lessons to assess their own and their peers' learning. Pupils know and understand their learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics, which are suitably challenging. The accent placed on these approaches enables pupils to be fully involved in their own learning, to show aspiration and to track their own progress and levels of achievement.

Through the expert leadership of the headteacher, high expectations have been established. Partnership working, in class by pupils, among staff and with parents and carers, has created a cohesive school community, determined to seek higher achievement for each and every pupil. Leadership by all staff is fostered; for example, during this monitoring visit, teaching assistants confidently led reading support groups and teachers ran useful workshops for parents on how to help their children read. This exceptional teamwork has maintained the good behaviour seen



at the last inspection. The whole school positive ethos enables new arrivals to quickly aspire to be outstanding in their learning and behaviour.

There is an emerging track record of improvement which the school is well placed to sustain over time, as actions taken continue to impact on outcomes for all pupils. It has received effective support from the local authority's link improvement officer. More recently, the skilled senior leaders, ably supported by the governors, have led improvement work and external intervention has been reduced.

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

David Townsend

**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Annex**

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

- Ensure all teachers use data effectively by:
  - analysing their pupils' progress accurately and identifying further groups of pupils who may require targeted support or greater challenge
  - using the results to increase the proportion of pupils who gain the higher levels in English and mathematics in the national tests.
  
- Use ongoing assessment more effectively to plan lesson activities for pupils that are more practical, especially in Year 1, so that the rate of progress continues to increase.
  
- Ensure that data from marking and other forms of assessment are linked to targets and that these targets are reviewed regularly to help pupils develop a better understanding of how they can improve their work.

