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Mr J O'Rourke
Headteacher
Washingborough Primary School
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Dear Mr O'Rourke

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils I met and to the staff who made time to talk to me.

As a result of the inspection on 19–20 October 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.

The latest results from 2010 show that the Year 6 pupils' progress was much improved over that of 2009. It was especially positive in English and this is a direct result of the work done to raise standards in writing. Progress in mathematics is less secure but improved from 2009. Attainment in English rose from significantly below average in 2009 to above average in 2010. In mathematics, attainment rose less steeply and remained below average. Data and pupils' work show current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards that are at least as good, especially in writing, with more reaching the higher levels.

In Year 2, attainment fell to below average for a number of reasons. This fall has been halted, and current standards, as seen in the school's tracking and in pupils' work, show that attainment in the current Year 2 has risen sharply this year, particularly in writing. Especially positive is the much-increased proportion who are on track to reach the higher levels.

The progress and quality of pupils' learning have shown good improvement since the last inspection. This has been the result of a lot of hard work by the headteacher and staff which has successfully begun to address the weaknesses identified. Teaching and learning have improved, and pupils themselves can identify a number of important improvements to the quality of the teaching they receive.

The raising of standards in writing has been a major focus for the school. The quality of writing is now good overall and occasionally it is outstanding. For example, recent work on *Romeo and Juliet* in Key Stage 2 has resulted in descriptive writing about Verona such as, 'I can smell romance as it pulls hearts together.' This has been the result of a number of significant improvements to the provision. The school has adopted a more consistent approach to handwriting. A range of new techniques for inspiring writing, and especially that of boys, has been introduced. Teachers are making very good use of new technology and using film, video, photography and other visual strategies to good purpose. Ways for pupils to frame their writing and think about aspects such as observation, imagination and emotion are successfully used. Work remains to be done on the consistency of spelling, but there is good evidence of writing for a range of purposes and at length through cross-curricular themes.

The improvements in writing have also been the result of more consistently good teaching, especially in the way assessment is used in planning and organising lessons. The headteacher has ensured teachers have a better awareness and understanding of available data showing how well their pupils are progressing. Regular monitoring of lessons, planning and pupils' work has helped spread good practice. Teachers are using the information they have more effectively in, for example, providing appropriately challenging tasks for pupils with different prior attainment. There are still some inconsistencies in the teaching and some staff have had more opportunity to fully integrate new ideas and techniques than others. However, pupils talk very positively about changes to the teaching and can explain how an idea such as the use of displays and word banks can 'kick start the lessons'.

The headteacher has restructured the senior leadership team. Responsibilities are more widely delegated and all are clear about their roles. A major strength has been the involvement of leaders and other staff in professional development and training. Teachers have worked together on an excellent project for improving their professional skills where they plan jointly, observe each other teach and then use pupils' views to add to any analysis of successes or failures in the learning. This work has been so successful that the deputy headteacher is now leading its extension into other schools in the local authority. A range of partnerships with other schools, and support from the local authority, have all contributed positively to good improvement. Leaders hold regular meetings with class teachers about how well their pupils are progressing and, because of this, early interventions are put in place to ensure any underachievement is addressed. The senior leadership team demonstrates a real ambition to raise standards still further and some of the good

strategies used to improve the quality of writing are now being used to help raise standards in mathematics. The improvements made to the senior leadership team, the recent training all staff have undertaken, the greatly improved quality of pupils' writing and the more consistent approach to teaching all highlight the good capacity the school has to improve further in the future.

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

Geof Timms
Additional inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length in English and in other subjects
 - embedding a consistent approach to the teaching of writing across the school.

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers make more effective use of assessment information when planning lessons.

- Enable senior staff to contribute more effectively to the leadership of the school by providing them with a clear training programme that helps them to more clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.