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Mrs J Randall
Bowlsh Infant School
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Dear Mrs Randall

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bowlsh Infant School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 March 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to your staff, governors and pupils who found time to talk to me during my visit.

The school has experienced a number of changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher has been appointed and took up her post in April 2010. One class teacher has left the school and significant refurbishment to the school buildings has taken place.

As a result of the inspection on 16–17 March 2010, 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.

Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and a higher proportion are working at levels above those expected for their ages. In 2010, pupils attained above average standards in reading and mathematics, but average standards in writing. The indications from the school's tracking and from a scrutiny of pupils' work are that pupils are making better progress, particularly in writing. They are on track to attain above average standards in all three areas this year. The primary reason why attainment is improving is that the quality of teaching has improved well. Teachers use the school's assessment systems, which had just been introduced at the last inspection, to much better purpose. They use information from assessment



to ensure that they group pupils appropriately in class. They present pupils with tasks that are well matched to their needs and abilities and really challenge them. In lessons, teachers use questions effectively to judge the level of pupils' understanding. The pace of lessons is generally brisk although very occasionally teachers talk for too long giving pupils less time in which to complete their written tasks. Pupils are told what they are going to learn and what the teacher is looking to find in their written work. Timed tasks are used well to focus pupils' attention and the use of talk partners in most classes enables pupils to discuss and explore their ideas effectively. As a result, pupils remain on-task for the whole period because they know exactly what they are expected to achieve.

Teachers are using pupils' curriculum experiences to much greater effect in their writing. Opportunities for writing in subjects across the curriculum are now being identified well and teachers are really exploiting topics, such as Super Heroes, to inspire and motivate all pupils. The timing of the visit coincided with the final day in the school's Charity Week for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. Much writing had been generated during the week on this topic and that of animals generally. Learning circus skills, earlier on in the year, also created great interest and exploration of exciting language.

The school has made good progress in extending its links with schools in contrasting communities. The governors are anxious that links should be meaningful and sustainable not tokenistic. Contacts have been made through the school's own staff, or schools within the community learning partnership. As a result the school has established links with schools in China, Fiji, Ghana and Wales and is in the process of establishing links with an Australian school. The pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of these links. They talked enthusiastically about the hand prints and information they wrote about themselves to send to the children in the school in Ghana. The school has developed further links in the local community very well, which include sharing harvest gifts with older people, accepting students on work placement from local colleges and participation in the Glastonbury festival.

The new leadership has added rigour to the monitoring of teaching and learning and there is a renewed drive for improvement. The headteacher and school have received particularly helpful support from colleagues within the local community learning partnership. The school has also been visited by a local authority adviser and the School Improvement Partner who have given satisfactory help with identifying priorities for development.

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

Christine Huard
Additional Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010.

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring teaching consistently challenges pupils and always focuses on pupils' learning
 - improving the pace of learning so that pupils are kept at full stretch in all phases of the lesson
 - using pupils' varied curriculum experiences to provide additional stimuli for writing.

- Build on and extend links with schools in contrasting environments, improving pupils' understanding of other communities.