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Miss Susan Stanley  
Headteacher  
Willow Tree Primary School  
Priors Farm Lane  
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Middlesex  
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Dear Miss Stanley

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Willow Tree Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave Martin Marsh, additional inspector and myself when we inspected your school on 8 December 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please extend my sincere thanks to the staff and the pupils, to members of the senior and middle leadership team, and the pupils whom we interviewed.

Following the last inspection in April 2009, the previous headteacher left in August 2009 and the deputy headteacher took on responsibility as acting headteacher between August 2009 and March 2010. The current substantive headteacher has been in post since April 2010. The school recruited 17 new members of staff, including six new members of teaching staff in September and an assistant headteacher with responsibility for inclusion. The school appointed a local authority-funded Parent Support Adviser (PSA). An additional Reception/Foundation Stage 2 class was opened in September 2010. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasing and this presents challenges in terms of the provision to meet their needs.

As a result of the inspection on 31 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is too low and the progress made by different groups of pupils varies significantly. For instance, in summer 2010, Year 6 pupils' attainment in writing was broadly average, but low in reading, English overall

and mathematics. Boys and girls who were below Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 made inadequate progress, as did those pupils who are assessed as School Action. Furthermore, high numbers of pupils attained below Level 3 at the end of Year 6.

Local authority and school data indicate that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress by the end of the Reception Year. However, this good start is not sustained; attainment in Key Stage 1 is exceptionally low and progress for all pupils is inadequate. For example, in 2010, nearly half of 67 pupils in Year 1 underachieved against expectations in writing. By the end of Year 2, boys' attainment is lower than that of girls and all pupils attained worse outcomes in writing and mathematics than in reading. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attained less well than others. Key Stage 1 results exceeded targets set for pupils at Level 2 and above. This indicates that the targets may not have been sufficiently challenging.

Inspectors observed the same variable levels of learning and progress during lessons. In the majority of lessons, teachers built good relationships with pupils and fostered an enjoyable learning environment. However, in a significant number of lessons, the vast majority of pupils made barely satisfactory progress with some making inadequate progress. This was because teachers did not plan appropriate activities or use questioning techniques that took into account pupils' prior attainment, and many did not sufficiently check pupils' learning. Therefore, more-able pupils were not challenged in their learning and those who were less able did not contribute productively or develop the necessary literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, in a small minority of cases, pupils were unable to concentrate or lost interest because the tasks set did not fully engage them and meet their needs. Teaching assistants working with pupils in lessons are not deployed effectively and do not structure tasks to help pupils develop independent learning skills. Marking of pupils' work is too variable in quality. Although a number of teachers give detailed feedback on pieces of marked work, it is not clear what impact this has on raising attainment and improving pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge.

An area where the school has been successful is in raising the quality of pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work. Pupils value the higher standards that teachers now set for their work.

The headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, is highly committed and has worked hard since September to raise attainment and accelerate progress for all pupils. Actions include one-to-one tuition for pupils, pupil review meetings and a greater rigour in the role of phase leaders and subject coordinators. While it is too early to assess the full impact of these, middle managers believe they now have greater involvement and accountability within the school. However, in view of the systemic nature of underachievement for a significant number of pupils, there is insufficient rigour in the coordination of these activities. The quality of development planning lacks precision and clarity in what constitutes the main priorities and actions for the school. Training for the governing body has not taken place this term, owing to poor attendance, and a number of members

have left. The capacity of the governing body is inadequate in providing the necessary effective support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders.

The local authority has not provided sufficiently well-focused support for the school since the last inspection. However, since the start of this term, there has been renewed rigour and a recommendation that significant support be implemented from January, through the local authority's Schools Causing Concern programme.

The inspection has raised very serious concerns. These will be considered by the appropriate Regional Director, Inspection Delivery, who will decide when the school will next be inspected.

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

Meena Wood

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 31 March–1 April 2009.**

As a result of the inspection on 31 March – 1 April 2009, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is good and outstanding.
- Raise expectations for the quality of pupils' handwriting and the way they set out their work.
- Improve the quality of development planning so that aspects to be improved are more clearly understood and it is apparent how success is to be measured