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Mrs C Lewis
Headteacher
Hollyfield Primary School
Hollyfield Road
Sutton Coldfield
B75 7SG

Dear Mrs C Lewis

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 4 May 2011 with my colleague Robert Barbour HMI and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on our thanks to the pupils and staff for their help and cooperation during the visit.

Since the time of the previous inspection the school has coped well with significant staff turbulence with a number of staff going on, and returning from, maternity leave.

As a result of the inspection on 26 January 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.

Standards have risen within the school, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. The school's tracking system demonstrates that the progress made by pupils has increased since the time of the previous inspection and is now often good. Information is readily available to demonstrate the progress made by different groups, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities. This information shows far more pupils are reaching the higher levels. Also a group of pupils with special education needs who had standards below average when they took their Key Stage 1 assessments are now making good progress and closing the gap between themselves and their peers. The strong emphasis on improving reading and writing skills and to ensure pupils reach higher standards in mathematics means that pupils are better able to use these key skills well in other subjects. This ensures that pupils attain well across all subjects.



The progress made by pupils during lessons is often good and at times excellent. During the visit, pupils were observed to be very highly motivated and engaged in their learning. They were also keen to explain that this was often the case during lessons because teachers plan a variety of activities which they enjoy. Consequently, behaviour observed was at least good and at times exemplary. It was impressive to observe how well pupils took responsibility for their own learning. For example, when a group of boys had visited different tables to look at artefacts dealing with the rainforest, they settled down well to start their writing. Marking is good. In books, staff identify how well pupils have achieved and then explain how they could improve. It is common to see comments from teachers asking pupils to extend their work or to justify their responses and then for pupils to respond to these comments. This learning dialogue is very much appreciated by pupils.

Good progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching. School leaders have ensured that all staff know what good learning looks like and how they can adapt their teaching to ensure good or better progress in lessons and over time. Lessons include a wide variety of engaging activities. All lessons include a strong emphasis on literacy, and, when appropriate, English lessons often build upon the work being covered in other areas of the curriculum. Mathematical developments are used well in science and design technology lessons and the pupils were very keen to explain how they enjoyed the work when they took part in a recent 'Dragon's Den' activity.

The school has made significant improvements in the areas identified during the last inspection. Leaders are not complacent and they realise they need to ensure all improvements are fully embedded over a longer period of time. There is an accurate self-evaluation, involving input from subject leaders. The school works well with other local primary schools and secondary schools to support developments, to ensure greater accuracy with assessments and also to better prepare pupils for transfer when they leave at the end of Year 6. The headteacher, very well supported by other senior leaders and members of the governing body, gives a very strong steer on how the school is to continue to develop. Her drive and ambition is shared by staff. Leaders are aware of any relative weaknesses and are working effectively to overcome these. This demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

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

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment further by:
 - improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning to that of the best
 - ensuring pupils always get good guidance about how to improve their work
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in writing and mathematics across the curriculum.