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9 June 2011

Mrs S Bloomer
Headteacher
Rufford Primary School
Bredon Avenue
Stourbridge
DY9 7NR

Dear Mrs Bloomer

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 June 2011 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on our thanks to the pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner who is also a local authority adviser, the coordinator for the Stourbridge Learning Partnership and to staff for their help and cooperation during the visit.

Since the time of the previous inspection, the school has coped well with staff turbulence with a number of staff going on temporary leave and being replaced by staff on temporary contracts.

As a result of the inspection on 16 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.

Attainment has risen, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, in both mathematics and English. The school's improved tracking system has been key to identifying how well pupils are progressing and, particularly, in reducing variation in the performance of different groups, for example pupils from different ethnic backgrounds or those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Data is also used to hold staff to account for the achievement of their pupils. The school is now able to show improved progress and that standards, although still low, are improving and closer to average. Information is also used to ensure greater challenge within lessons and across the year. Consequently, lessons are more demanding and pupils feel that



their work is stretching them. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities are well supported and they make good progress. The strong emphasis on improving communication, language and literacy skills for children, many of who arrive at school with low levels, in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been successful in improving their skills. It has also led to improvements in literacy levels when these children then progress into Key Stage 1. The school is working well with the Stourbridge Learning Partnership to help raise the aspirations of pupils and their parents and carers. At the time of the inspection, the Partnership was supporting Year 6 pupils while attending a course at Wolverhampton University and with a group of Year 5 pupils who visited a Hindu temple.

The progress made by pupils during lessons is at least satisfactory and often good. During the visit, pupils were observed to be highly motivated and engaged in their learning, especially when lessons were interactive and practical. They were also keen to explain that this was often the case during lessons because teachers plan a variety of activities which they enjoy. The behaviour observed was good, and pupils responded well to teachers' reminders of the school's expectations. Marking has improved significantly and is good. In books, staff give pupils helpful advice on how to improve their work. However, time is not always given to pupils to respond to these comments. Good progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching. School leaders have changed the curriculum so that repetition is reduced and it is now more relevant. Pupils practise their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects while also building upon the topic work within English and mathematics.

The school has made significant improvements in the areas identified in the last inspection report. Leaders are not complacent and they realise that many of the improvements are not fully embedded. There is an accurate self-evaluation and this has been used to formulate a clear school improvement plan. This plan includes clear and appropriate success criteria by which the governing body is better able to hold the school to account. The school works well with other local schools within the Stourbridge Learning Partnership to support developments and to improve community cohesion within the locality. The headteacher, well supported by other senior leaders and the governing body, gives a strong steer on how the school is to continue to develop. Her drive and ambition is shared by staff. Leaders are aware of relative weaknesses and are working effectively to overcome these, particularly by reducing the gaps between the achievement of different groups by raising that of the lowest performing groups to be closer to that of the best. 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 September 2009

- Raise the standards that pupils achieve in English and mathematics by:
 - eliminating any variations between groups
 - ensuring that pupils make good progress across each key stage
 - increasing the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - reviewing the curriculum to remove unnecessary overlap and increasing the relevance of tasks to pupils' interests and experience
 - making better use of marking to provide pupils with clear guidance about how the quality of their work can be improved.

- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership on driving improvement by:
 - focusing the school's improvement priorities more sharply against the intended outcomes for pupils
 - setting quantifiable success criteria that can be used to evaluate the impact of each initiative
 - making more effective use of assessment data to track and monitor individual pupil's performance and adjust their targets accordingly.