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14 December 2011

Ms Vivienne Luniak  
The Headteacher  
Beulah Junior School  
Beulah Road  
Thornton Heath  
Surrey  
CR7 8JF

Dear Ms Luniak

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Beulah Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please extend my thanks to the pupils and to the Chair of the Governing Body, as well as the representative from the local authority who gave time to speak to me.

As a result of the inspection on 19 and 20 May 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

A substantive deputy headteacher took post in September 2010. The leadership team, although now established, is relatively new.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Overall, in 2011, Key Stage 2 results demonstrate that pupils' attainment was low, although there is a clear trend of improvement. Progress has accelerated in some year groups since the previous inspection because there have been improvements to the consistency of teaching and learning overall. However, there is still much more to do to bridge the gap between pupils' low attainment and that expected nationally. Monitoring of teaching by the school, the local authority and inspection evidence indicates that teaching is improving securely and there is a steadily growing proportion of good lessons. The focus is now firmly on how to promote learning through independent thinking and practical activities that engage and motivate



pupils. Consistent planning and better use of assessment information mean teachers plan more lively lessons which capture the interests and needs of most pupils. School leaders have worked successfully to engage staff in professional development and to share best practice with each other, although ironing out inconsistencies is taking time to achieve. In the best lessons learning objectives derive from a clear understanding of individual pupils' prior attainment, are closely matched to pupils' needs, particularly those who are more able, and used as a benchmark to check progress. Questioning requires pupils to develop their thinking skills and extend their verbal responses. Teachers deploy the teaching assistants and the support teacher well. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Sanctions are consistently applied and understood. Teachers also use praise particularly well to promote good attitudes to learning. Where teaching is less successful, it is because there is too much 'teacher talk' and opportunities are therefore missed to really enthuse pupils more fully in their learning and to develop their speaking and thinking skills. As a result, progress in these lessons is not as good as it could be.

Since the previous inspection, procedures have been implemented for assessing pupils and tracking their progress. For example, termly meetings are held between teachers and senior leaders to check on individual pupils' progress, to inform decisions regarding intervention groups and to address underachievement in specific areas. Senior leaders are wisely planning to move the termly progress meetings to half-termly intervals. The development of these systems for monitoring pupils' progress, together with well-focused support to meet the needs of pupils, is beginning to have a positive impact on their progress. The quality of marking remains variable; some marking is regular and encouraging, but generally marking does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance on how to improve. Additionally, identified areas for improvement are not followed up in subsequent marking.

The governing body demonstrates a willingness to take part in training which will further enhance its role and in so doing develop the school's capacity to improve. Local authority and senior school staff have worked with the governing body to increase their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, particularly the interpretation of performance data. The Chair of the Governing Body displays a growing determination to meet the challenges faced by the school.

The headteacher is a strong presence in the school. She has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders have identified key priorities for action in the school improvement plan. However, whilst the main improvement actions are identified accurately, it is not always clear how the impact of the actions taken will be measured, particularly in terms of pupils' outcomes. The school's sound capacity for further improvement is underpinned by a shared culture of driving forward improvements which have, during the past months, delivered satisfactory progress in the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. The challenge for the school now is to ensure the rate of progress seen on this visit is built upon so that it is consistently good. School leaders are positive about the support provided by the local authority which has led to improvements in provision and resources.



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

Kekshan Salaria  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 200**

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that all teachers:
  - consistently apply the school's system and processes, and,
  - use high-quality feedback and guidance evident in the best lessons to help pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Share existing good practice and ensure greater consistency among teachers in planning lessons that provide appropriate challenge for more-able pupils.
- Improve quality of governance by ensuring the governing body challenge the new leadership team and teachers on achievement and hold them accountable.