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Mrs Linda Sullivan
Headteacher
Dale Community Primary School
Porter Road
Derby
Derbyshire
DE23 6NL

Dear Mrs Sullivan

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour: monitoring inspection of Dale Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 February with Aune Turkson-Jones, additional inspector, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and the Chair of the Governing Body with whom I spoke, for their time and courtesy. I would like particularly to thank the pupils for the enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the previous inspection there have been no significant contextual changes.

As a result of the inspection on 17 June 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 the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Most children begin school with knowledge and skills extremely well below those typical for their age. A high proportion of pupils join the school each year during the course of Key Stage 2, frequently in Years 5 and 6, with no English language skills. Evidence from lesson observations and school assessment data confirms that nearly all the pupils are making at least satisfactory progress from their starting points, in lessons and over time, with many beginning to make more accelerated progress. There is evidence of many pupils working at levels close to those expected for their age. Despite this, because of the late entry of a significant number of pupils, this good improvement is not reflected in attainment at the end of Year 6. The satisfactory and often good progress that pupils are now making, is ensuring that attainment gaps for groups identified as potentially vulnerable is closing. This is

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particularly the case for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, boys and those from minority ethnic heritages. These developments are the result of rapidly improving provision, rising expectations and the impact of strong, strategic leadership.

The quality of teaching

All teachers and teaching assistants are involved in a rigorous programme of improving teaching and learning which is being led by an independent consultant. The impact of this can be seen in the improved quality of teaching, which is typically good, as well as in the more rapid progress now being made by many pupils. There are a number of good features which are evident in most lessons. For example, learning intentions are made clear and sharp success criteria are shared so that pupils know what they have to achieve. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and independent work in most lessons. In the best lessons, there is a good level of pupil engagement in whole-class discussions and the pace of learning is maintained throughout. Teachers are developing greater skill and confidence in using assessment data to inform planning and to check pupils' understanding. However, sometimes the pace of learning slows when teachers do not use information about pupils' abilities to structure their main task well enough to help them undertake it successfully, or when they do not provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils. Regular and rigorous monitoring of assessment data is being carried out by senior leaders so that, where patterns of slow progress are seen by individuals, groups or whole classes, swift action is taken and support provided. The school has implemented a revised marking policy since the previous inspection. The marking of books is consistently good throughout the school and is beginning to promote an effective dialogue between pupil and teacher.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour seen in lessons and around school during the inspection was consistently good. Pupils' good behaviour makes a positive contribution to the effectiveness of learning. They understand the school's routines well and expectations are high. The school promotes a strong ethos of tolerance and respect and, as a result, it is a happy and harmonious community. Pupils say that they feel safe at school, enjoy good friendships and that there is no intimidating or poor behaviour.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The headteacher, together with other senior leaders, has been effective in setting high expectations of all staff and giving a clear vision which is understood and shared. Appropriately prioritised and focused action plans, as well as challenging targets, are increasing the proportion of good teaching and boosting progress for many pupils. The governing body has positive relationships with senior leaders and is able to ask challenging questions and hold them to account.

The local authority has not been sufficiently involved in identifying areas for development or in plotting a course for improvement. Consequently, their work has not impacted on the school's good progress.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress by:
 - raising the proportion of good or better teaching to 80% by June 2011
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to improve
 - further extend the analysis of assessment data to include the progress made by all groups of pupils across different subjects, to enable the identification of patterns of underachievement and where good practice can be share and resources targeted.