

School Improvement Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

**Direct Tel** 020 7421 6594  
**Direct Fax** 020 7421 6855

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Miss V Upton  
Headteacher  
Petts Hill Primary School  
Newmarket Avenue  
Northolt  
Middlesex  
UB5 4HB

Dear Miss Upton

### **Fresh Start: Inspection of Petts Hill Primary School**

Following the visit of Mrs G Oldham, Additional Inspector to your school on 13 and 14 June 2005, I write to confirm the findings which are recorded below.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school opened in September 2003. The focus of the visit was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the raising attainment plan.

During the visit 13 lessons or parts of lessons and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the other members of the senior leadership team, the chair of governors and the link advisor. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, the Additional Inspector made the following observations to the headteacher, the other members of the senior leadership team, the chair of governors, another governor, and the link advisor.

Since the last monitoring inspection, there has been a slight increase in the number of pupils on roll. The current figure is 195, including 47 part-time pupils in the nursery. The headteacher reports that the reception class is over-subscribed for September 2005. Family mobility within the catchment area remains high. The numbers of pupils leaving or joining the school during the year are greater in Years

2, 4 and 5 than elsewhere. Almost half the pupils are entitled to free school meals, well above the national figure. Twenty seven per cent of the pupils have special educational needs; above the national average. The proportion of the pupils who speak English as an additional language continues to rise: the current figure of just over 50 per cent is very high. The most common first language spoken is Somali and very recently, a project has been successfully established aimed at providing advice and support to the parents of these pupils.

The quality and maintenance of the internal accommodation are good. Significant improvements have been made to the external environment through the establishment of well organised and resourced playgrounds and a wildlife area. The pupils made good use of these facilities during lessons and at break and lunch times.

The attainment of the pupils on entry to the nursery is well below average. In lessons, the pupils made good progress, particularly in aspects of their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, and number. The staff provided well-focused support that helped to extend the pupils' concentration. The quality of provision in the reception class has continued to develop well and the pupils are making good progress. In lessons, standards in aspects of language and literacy, and number were satisfactory. The pupils' personal and social development was good and they worked competently on group and individual tasks. Overall, standards in lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 were below those expected for the pupils' ages and were generally lower in Year 2 than elsewhere, particularly in literacy. However, in some of the work; for example, in number in Year 1, and science in Years 4 and 5, the pupils were achieving standards close to those expected of the same age nationally. The school's assessment data shows that, across the key stages, most pupils are making good progress. This information is analysed carefully and the results are used effectively to organise appropriately targeted support for those pupils who most need it.

Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last monitoring inspection with a higher proportion of good and very good lessons. In 12 of the 13 lessons, the teaching was satisfactory or better; including six where it was good and two where it was very good. The strongest teaching was in the Foundation Stage and Years 1, 4 and 5. In one lesson, in Year 3, the teaching was unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the way the class was managed and the inaccurate match of work to the pupils' different abilities, particularly that planned for the lower attainers.

Throughout the school, the quality of the lesson planning was thorough and detailed, and the objectives were described clearly to the pupils so that they understood what they were expected to learn. In almost all the lessons, the work

was appropriately matched to the different ability levels of the pupils and built progressively on their previous skills, knowledge and understanding. In the most successful lessons, the pupils were encouraged to assess the quality of their own work and that of others, and to suggest where improvements could be made. Effective use was made of short plenary sessions during the course of the lesson to focus the pupils on their achievement and to set objectives for subsequent work. As a result of the training and support the teachers have received both from the school's information and communication technology (ICT) subject leader and an LEA advisory teacher, their skills in using interactive whiteboards have improved significantly. The boards were used well in many of the lessons. In a Years 4 and 5 science lesson, very effective use was made of a digital camera to record the results of the pupils' practical work. The information was used very productively during the plenary session.

In lessons, the teaching assistants made a valuable contribution. They worked well alongside the teachers, had a good understanding of the needs of the pupils they were supporting, and often modelled aspects of the work to help the pupils to understand particular concepts. During some of the whole-class sessions led by the teacher, the teaching assistants were used productively to help the less confident or less-able pupils to contribute.

The quality of curriculum planning in the Foundation Stage is good. The work covers the six areas of learning and there is an appropriate balance between adult-focused tasks and child-initiated activities. Effective use is made of both the indoor and the outdoor facilities. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is an increase in the way links between subjects are planned and more opportunities are being provided for the pupils to use and develop their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. Visits and clubs after school are being used successfully to enrich the pupils' experiences. A range of ICT is being used effectively to develop good quality resources.

The leadership and management by the headteacher are very good. She sets out clearly a vision for the school that is focused on raising standards through improving the teaching and learning. The headteacher is very effectively supported by the two other members of the senior leadership team whose management skills are developing well as more responsibilities are given to them. These two staff also make an important contribution to curriculum development and the provision for the pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language. Positive steps are being taken to strengthen the skills of some of the middle managers in planning aspects of the school's work.

Rigorous procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the school's progress in implementing the raising attainment plan and the outcomes are used

well to plan subsequent work and shape the way the professional needs of the whole staff and individual teachers are developed. The self-evaluation form (SEF) that was recently completed provides a comprehensive and accurate assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The involvement of all the teachers in the process of completing the SEF has helped to develop their ability to assess the quality of the school's work.

The governing body continues to be well led by an experienced and effective chair of governors. She is very supportive of the school and works with the senior staff to monitor and evaluate the raising attainment plan. The appointment of some new governors has strengthened the committee structure of the governing body and has made it possible to devolve the workload more equitably.

There is a positive ethos in the school and relationships at all levels are good. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory or better in 12 of the lessons; in ten they were either good or very good. The pupils were keen to learn and responded enthusiastically to the demands that were made of them. The atmosphere in the classrooms was calm and purposeful and, at break and lunch times, the pupils played well together. In the lesson where there were weaknesses in the teaching, the pupils' took too long to settle to their work and many did not listen attentively enough during the introductory session. This slowed the rate of progress they made.

The staff are well aware of the social and emotional needs of the pupils and they provide appropriate levels of support. A good range of strategies is being developed. These enable the pupils to be actively involved in aspects of the school's development and include the school council and the recent pupil questionnaire. Through a number of initiatives the school is encouraging the pupils to adopt a healthy life style.

As a result of the rigorous strategies that are used to monitor attendance, the rate has risen year-on-year, but the current figure of 93.7 per cent is below the national figure for primary schools.

The school continues to benefit from the consistent support of the experienced link advisor. Her work has had a positive impact on improving the teaching and learning and more recently, in helping to develop the work in the Foundation Stage and moderating the school's self-evaluation.

The school has made good progress in implementing the raising attainment plan and good progress overall in improving the quality of education.

In order to improve the provision further, the school needs to:

- address the weaknesses in the teaching in Year 3;
- raise attendance.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Interim Director of Education for Ealing.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of School Improvement

cc: chair of governors  
LEA