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Mrs M McMeechan
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McMeechan

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected the Centre with Linda McGill HMI on 14 February 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 1 February 2006, the centre was asked to: establish more systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness; ensure that more regular pupil assessment not only informs teaching and learning but is also used to demonstrate pupils' progress; and, work with partners to adapt the accommodation to more effectively meet the pupils' learning needs.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the Centre is making satisfactory progress.

The centre has established more systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. The senior team has devised a monitoring plan which has an appropriate timeline for activities, making expectations clearer for staff. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has monitored subject files, schemes of work and lesson planning, and has conducted book scrutinies and lesson observations. The local authority has supported the centre well in improving the quality of monitoring in the school. Although this demonstrates satisfactory progress since the time of the last inspection, these actions have so far had only a limited impact on the provision in the school. Monitoring of planning has focused more on compliance with school policy than fitness for purpose and has yet to have a sufficiently rigorous impact on

planning to raise the achievement of pupils, classes or cohorts significantly. The monitoring of teaching and learning has responded to some of the comments in the last report and is beginning to have an impact on the quality of provision. However, it has not yet focused on particular initiatives or aspects of teaching methods with real precision. The management committee continues to develop in its role in monitoring the work of the centre.

The centre has made satisfactory progress with some good features in ensuring that more regular pupil assessment not only informs the teaching and learning but is also used to demonstrate pupils' progress. It is using software developed by Plymouth and Bristol local authorities to monitor social and academic progress. Consequently, social progress is now monitored and evaluated with more precision and with quantifiable targets which are linked more effectively to individual behaviour plans. Academic progress is recorded on the system at regular intervals and this is exemplified in helpful portfolios containing accurately assessed pieces of the pupils' work. It is too soon for the system to show secure evidence of its impact on planning but, within the timescale, progress is satisfactory.

The centre has done well to adapt the buildings more suitably to the learning needs of the pupils. It has developed more areas for vocational work and group work. Computer systems have been updated and are valued by the pupils. The school has made some attempt to brighten the environment in social areas and in classrooms. However, there is little evidence of improvement to the general fabric of the dilapidated, dispiriting and unwelcoming accommodation in which the centre is housed. This cannot be adequately remedied by cosmetic attention and the centre relies on collaboration with its partners to make any significant improvement to the provision. Consequently, progress in this particular area is inadequate overall, although the centre's own contribution has been satisfactory.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in the centre.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector