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Ms Helen Tate
The Headteacher
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Dear Ms Tate

Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 July 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, students and governors who met with me.

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 28 June 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise expectations and the level of challenge, particularly for more able pupils
- establish a strategic plan to address all the implications of the school's growth in size and change to primary status
- set up systematic and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning in order to support clear evaluations of the school's performance.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

The school has developed good systems to assess and track pupils' progress, to set targets, and to identify and address underachievement. These systems are helping to raise expectations about what pupils can achieve. They are also being used to identify strengths and possible areas for improvement across the school. They clearly demonstrate that pupils are making better progress, with a greater proportion now achieving challenging targets. More able pupils make as much progress as others. The provisional results for the 2007 Key Stage 1 national tests also indicate a rise in standards this year.

There is now a regular and rigorous programme of lesson observation. The local authority has provided good support, for example by carrying out joint lesson observations with the headteacher. Lesson observation has been used to identify and address areas for improvement across the school and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the proportion of good or better lessons has increased since the last inspection. Pupils say that learning is now more active and engaging and that they feel suitably challenged by their lessons. Where the school's monitoring has identified lessons that are less effective, appropriate action is being taken to improve practice.

Feedback to pupils does not always help them to understand how to improve their work. The school recently introduced a new system for marking and assessment. This is not yet used consistently across the school and some pupils do not fully understand it. The school appreciates that they have more work to do to develop this important area.

When the headteacher took up post in 2006, she rightly identified the need to produce an interim development plan quickly to address the school's immediate needs. This provided a good basis for action during the year. Since then she has consulted extensively with staff, governors, parents and pupils. Coupled with improved monitoring of pupils' progress and more extensive lesson observation, this has deepened the school's knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and supported much better planning. Planning for subject development is also improving. There are very clear links between the school's identification of its needs, planning for improvement, and the allocation of financial resources. As a result, the development plan focuses sharply on the key issues for the school and fully addresses the needs of the move to full primary school status. In some cases, however, plans do not clearly identify ways in which the impact of actions will be measured. This restricts the ability of staff and governors to monitor their success.

The headteacher has provided strong and effective leadership and management to ensure that all of the areas for improvement are being addressed robustly. Governors are now more directly involved in monitoring the work of the school. Much has been achieved in the past twelve months and the school is well placed to continue its improvement over the coming years.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector