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Mrs H Wainwright
The Headteacher
West Huntspill Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Wainwright

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you, your staff, governors and pupils gave when I inspected your school on 20 June 2008, 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 31 October 2007, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' progress and ensure that pupils attain the standards of which they are capable
- ensure that teaching is closely matched to all pupils' needs and that expectations of all pupils are high enough
- improve opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work activities in mathematics and science and to write at length
- make sure all pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their performance
- develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring and improving provision.

There have been considerable changes in staffing. The headteacher, seconded from the local authority as acting headteacher in January 2008, was appointed permanently to the post in April 2008. The Year 2 and 3 class has been taught since February 2008 by a teacher seconded to the school for two terms and the permanent teacher for this class has recently returned following absence since September 2007. A federation between the school and a local primary school commences in September 2008. There will be one governing body and two headteachers. Located at the school is an autistic resource base. This inspection focused on provision in the main school.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The appointment of a permanent headteacher, who has quickly won the confidence and support of the staff and governors, has brought a sense of stability and optimism to the school. The headteacher has acted with energy, determination and speed during the short period of time she has been in post. She has set a clear direction for the school with a sharp focus on improving the standards attained by pupils, particularly in English and mathematics.

The headteacher has rightly focused on ensuring that essential school improvement processes are established and understood. A robust system for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress has been implemented and the headteacher acted quickly to ensure that accurate assessments of all pupils were secured to provide a reliable benchmark against which to judge their progress. This information is being effectively used to set appropriate targets which have helped to raise teachers' expectations of pupils and to channel good intervention strategies to support pupils' learning.

Good training for teachers and teaching assistants, strengthening team work and regular monitoring have improved the quality of teaching, which is now satisfactory. There is improved use of assessment data to inform teachers' planning with learning now better matched to the differing needs of pupils. Pupils know their targets and there is evidence of some good marking that provides clear advice which pupils report helps them to know what to do to improve their work. This quality of marking is not yet, however, securely embedded across the school.

Enhanced opportunities for extended writing, which are carefully assessed and moderated, have been introduced and remain a significant feature of the school's focus on improving pupils' standards. Opportunities for learning through investigations in mathematics and science have increased and pupils speak enthusiastically about them. This type of learning, however, still needs to be extended within these subjects. The school knows that developing the pupils as independent learners and securing consistently good teaching across the school are key priorities.

Recent improvements in the school have had a positive impact on pupils' progress and standards. The school's assessment information demonstrates that pupils' current rate of progress is satisfactory overall, although there is some variation in the rate at which pupils are making up lost ground. Effective interventions have accelerated the rates of progress for some pupils, for example the recent good progress made by pupils in Year 2. The school identifies where pupils' progress is slower and responds quickly and appropriately. Current foci for improvement include writing in Year 6 and reading in Year 3. Although pockets of underachievement remain, standards overall are broadly average.

The priority to secure key school improvement processes means that the role of subject leaders is at an early stage of development, although appropriate initial steps have been taken.

The local authority has provided substantial and high quality support to the school. Its appropriate programme of continued support is set out in the suitably amended statement of action. The local authority monitoring of the school's progress, however, is not sufficiently sharply focused on all the areas for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Valerie Pearson
Her Majesty's Inspector