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Mr I Hyde
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Dear Mr Hyde

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 December 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils who spent time talking with me.

As a result of the inspection on 25–26 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and improve pupils' progress in mathematics and science, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6
- extend leaders' accountability for raising standards and their role in making improvements and evaluating the impact of provision
- develop a whole-school approach to addressing the weaknesses in attainment and gaps in pupils' learning.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Last year, the school focused on improving achievement in Year 6. Although standards were well-below average overall, the pupils made good progress from their very low starting points at the end of Year 2. Progress in English was significantly better than the corresponding national value. This encouraging picture of accelerating progress is supported by lesson observations, analysis of the school's tracking data and scrutiny of pupils' books. Pupils in the current Year 6 are well on the way to attaining broadly average standards in English and below average standards in mathematics and science from similarly low starting points. This represents good improvement overall since the last inspection and a good increase in pupils' progress between Years 2 and 6.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average at the end of Year 2. This too, represents good progress from pupils' exceptionally low starting



points in Year 1. The school's own data show that pupils in the current Year 2 are well on track to attain average standards in all three subjects this year. Recent changes brought about by the leadership to strengthen provision in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 are now bearing fruit.

Children start school with skills and abilities that are at much lower levels than those expected for the age group. Assessments in 2008 and 2009 at the end of Reception show a significant increase in the numbers reaching the expected levels in all areas of learning. Previously, the majority of children failed to reach any of the age-related expectations by the start of Year 1.

Those children identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their varying starting points as well as those at the earliest stages of learning English as an additional language. Somali and Portuguese pupils are making good and sometimes very good progress. However, the progress made by Black Caribbean boys is not as rapid as that made by other groups.

The teaching I observed jointly with you was consistently good. Relationships are good and, as a result, most pupils work hard and learn at a good rate. Tasks are well matched to the needs of differing groups and individuals. Pupils work well together and enjoy opportunities to assess their own work. Marking and feedback are of a consistently good quality and help pupils improve their work. Teaching assistants provide good quality support. This means that pupils who find learning difficult or are at the early stages of learning English are able to play a full part in lessons. Pupils confirm that lessons are much more challenging and fun; as one pupil said, 'This school is so different from what it used to be and I now want to come here.'

Significant changes have been made to the way the school is managed in order to develop a rigorous whole-school approach to addressing the weaknesses in attainment. Significantly, middle leaders' roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are now very clear and teachers are held fully accountable for the progress made by the pupils in their classes. As a result, standards and achievement are rising because the school is setting challenging targets and achieving them, although more remains to be done. Regular leadership meetings ensure that the headteacher's vision for school improvement is widely shared among all leaders.

Local authority advisors and consultants have provided good support for school improvement which has been carefully tailored to meet the school's needs. Overall, there is now a shared vision for improvement, a clear sense of direction and an ambition to succeed. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Earish
Additional Inspector

