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Mrs Patricia Hinds
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Dear Mrs Hinds

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Since the school was last inspected there have been a number of changes to the school's context. The present deputy headteacher will retire at the end of December 2009 and two new deputy headteachers will take up their posts in January 2010. Middle leadership has been strengthened through a number of acting appointments. The number of long-term agency teachers has been reduced and six permanent staff were appointed from September 2009. There has been significant investment in redeveloping both indoor and outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

As a result of the inspection on 16 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve the role of middle managers in order to raise standards and increase pupils' progress
- ensure more able pupils receive enough challenge and reach higher standards, especially in writing
- improve the outdoor environment for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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.

Since the time of the last inspection standards have risen. In the 2009 national tests standards in Year 6 rose significantly. Attainment in English was good and pupils made particularly good progress, more able pupils did particularly well. This



encouraging picture of rising standards and accelerating progress is supported by lesson observations, analysis of the school's tracking data and scrutiny of pupils' books. In lessons teachers provide good support and encouragement. Classroom and corridor displays are used well to provide a stimulating environment, exemplify high standards and celebrate achievement. Teachers have high expectations and most pupils are clear about what it is they are expected to learn. As a result, the quality of writing is often good with pupils able to write in a range of styles. More able pupils use a wide range of exciting vocabulary and there is some high quality creative writing to be admired around the school. At the time of the last inspection peer assessment by pupils of each other's work was in the early stages of development. This good practice is now well embedded with pupils editing each others writing regularly and providing helpful, accurate and much appreciated feedback. A systematic approach to teaching letters and sounds to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to pupils in Year 3 is beginning to raise the quality of reading, writing and spelling. Some teachers use questioning very well to probe pupils' understanding and set particular challenges for individuals and groups. Pupils work very well together and enjoy opportunities to discuss their work. Where this is used well, pupils explore and consolidate new learning and make rapid progress. In some classes teachers talk for too long and opportunities for pupils to share their ideas are not used sufficiently well. Pupil progress meetings, where class teachers meet with the headteacher to review the progress of individual pupils, help ensure that individual learning needs are met and those at risk of falling behind are supported.

A good range of support has been put in place to enable year group and key subject leaders to better understand their role. Crucially, middle leaders' roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are now much clearer. This has resulted in a greater focus on standards and on the progress pupils make. Their attendance at leadership team meetings ensures that the headteacher's vision for school improvement is more widely shared among middle leaders. The school has a good focus on improving teaching and learning through continuing professional development. The development of middle leaders has had a high priority and has been usefully linked to visits to outstanding schools to see excellent teachers in action.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving and there are some exciting initiatives to involve parents and carers more closely in developing their children's speaking and listening skills. While there is a good focus on developing children's language and communication there is insufficient provision for children's creative development and links across areas of learning are not well developed. There have been significant improvements to the outdoor and indoor learning environment. Outcomes for children improved in 2009 and reflect a trend of steady, sustained improvement.

Local authority advisors and consultants have provided good support for school improvement which has been carefully tailored to meet the school's needs. Support



to date has included advice from a literacy consultant on improving writing, support for numeracy and for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Overall, there is now a shared vision for improvement, a clear sense of direction and an ambition to succeed. Standards are rising and 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

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector