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Mr R Stead  
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Dear Mr R Stead

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 October 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to the chair of governors for meeting me and to the staff and pupils who spoke to me during my visit.

The Early Years Foundation leader in post at the time of the last inspection left the school in February 2009. The Reception children were taught by a supply teacher until the end of April and this teacher continued to teach the class for the summer term on a job-share basis. The Key Stage 1 leader has taken on leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and is teaching in Reception this year.

As a result of the inspection on 15 October 2008, the school was asked to improve the quality of provision for children in the Reception class and to ensure greater consistency in how teachers help pupils to improve their work and progress. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The teaching, curriculum and assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved considerably and no inadequacies remain. This has rightly been a high priority for the headteacher and governors. The local authority has also provided focused guidance to support the school in this area. A lot has been accomplished in the last term and a half and the Early Years Foundation leader shows enthusiasm and determination to improve provision further. The learning environment is much tidier, more welcoming and better organised. The plans for children's learning and development are more suitable and all the required areas are now covered. Adults have good relationships with the children and provide good care and support. Children are becoming increasingly involved in their learning and are given

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opportunities to explore, use their imagination, make choices and share their ideas. Links with the playgroup are much stronger, as are links with parents. Systems are in place for observing and recording children's learning and development on a day-to-day basis. However, the information gathered on individual children is not yet collated into a manageable and easily accessible format and, as a result, does not yet give a secure picture of each child's learning and progress in all six areas of learning. The outdoor space has been developed and is used regularly by children. However, the plans for outdoor learning are not sufficiently explicit. As a result, the outdoor space is not yet used to full effect to promote and extend children's learning and development. The large majority of children who left Reception in 2009 had well developed knowledge and skills for their age. The school now has a secure baseline for these children to ensure their good standards continue from now on.

The school has introduced a common approach across the school for marking pupils' work and for setting pupils individual targets for writing and number work, to guide pupils in improving their work. While many pupils know their targets, understand what they mean and what they need to do, this is not the case in every class. For some, the targets have only been introduced over the last few weeks and they have not had a chance to become familiar and an integral part of their learning. There is some effective practice in both marking and the way targets are used, particularly in Years 2 and 6. Here, clear links can often be seen between the teachers' comments and the targets that pupils have been given, and marking gives a clear steer as to what they need to focus on next. In contrast, there are books where the planned tasks and the marking are not aligned to pupils' number and/or writing targets and this makes it difficult for pupils to know whether they have achieved them or not.

The 2009 test results, while not yet validated, are broadly in line with the national figures at Year 2 and slightly above at Year 6. In all lessons visited, pupils were enjoying their work and sustaining their concentration well. They participated fully in activities across a range of subjects, including French and music, and were keen to talk about and explain their written and practical work.

Local authority officers have provided appropriate guidance to help the senior leaders build capacity further. The headteacher has made a sound start in drawing up the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. At this stage, however, the school's own judgements of its effectiveness are not fully supported by evidence from monitoring, particularly in relation to pupils' learning, progress and achievement. The senior leaders know that this is an area that now deserves greater focus.

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 faithfully

Margaret Dickinson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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