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Ms Karen Hammond  
Headteacher  
Mellor Community Primary School  
Clarke Street  
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Dear Ms Hammond

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 February 2010, for the time you gave to our pre-inspection meeting and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and governors whom I spoke to.

Since the previous inspection the proportion of pupils in school who have recently arrived in this country has risen considerably. In particular, there is now a small minority of Tamil pupils. An increasing proportion of pupils enter the school, and in particular, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage speaking very little English. The proportion of pupils who arrive or leave school outside normal admission dates has doubled since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 27 February 2008, the school was asked to provide more opportunities for children to develop speaking in the Early Years Foundation Stage, improve teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 to increase the rate of progress of all groups, to ensure that guidance for pupils gives sufficient advice on how to improve their work and to take steps to reduce absence.

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.

School assessment information in the Early Years Foundation Stage shows that almost all children continue to enter school with skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics that are well below expected levels. Since the previous inspection the school has successfully accelerated the progress made by pupils so that by the time they leave Year 6 the very large majority have attained the expected level in English and mathematics. However, results for 2009 show that



standards by the end of Year 6 were significantly below average because too few pupils attain the higher level 5 in English and mathematics.

The provision to develop children's language in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably. A dedicated team of teachers and teaching assistants plan and create an exciting and stimulating range of activities that are underpinned by daily structured tasks sharply focussed on improving children's speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Consequently, children greatly enjoy their learning and are making faster progress which is rapidly narrowing the gap between their skills level and the expected level by the time they enter Year 1.

The proportion of teaching that is good at Key Stage 2 has increased since the previous inspection. The school has taken advantage of good support from a local authority advanced skills teacher to coach staff to improve their teaching. Teachers are now much better equipped to apply the expectations from the school's teaching and learning policy in their lessons so that pupils benefit from a much greater consistency of approach and learn more effectively. Teachers are using assessment information well to prepare work for pupils and this enables most of them to make faster progress. For example, the school has successfully ensured that there is little difference in the progress made by the pupils from a number of minority ethnic groups or for pupils that speak English as an additional language. Consequently, the very large majority now make at least the expected progress in Key Stage 2. However, in some lessons the more able pupils do not make as rapid progress as they could because work is insufficiently challenging.

The advice offered to pupils has improved considerably. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from very good coaching lessons for writing and reading that are closely linked to their personal targets for improvement. They report that they really appreciate this help and clearly demonstrate that they know what they need to do to improve their writing.

The school has forged a strong partnership between the local authority education welfare officer and staff responsible for attendance that has led to a steady, but significant rise in the attendance rate. The school has a very clear understanding of the reasons for absence and successfully employs a range of strategies to tackle them. Procedures to check pupils' absence are now much more robust than at the time of the last inspection. For example, parents are contacted early on the first day of absence, and absence due to illness has to be supported by evidence from the doctor.

Leadership and governance continues to strengthen. Rigorous procedures to hold staff to account for their work from subject leaders as well as the senior leadership team has led to the significant improvements in provision. Leaders have high expectations and are raising standards for all groups of pupils by setting challenging targets that most attain, demonstrating a stronger capacity 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

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector