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Mrs A Harris
Headteacher
Oxclose Village Primary School
Brancepeth Road
Oxclose Village
Tyne & Wear
NE38 0LA

Dear Mrs Harris

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 May 2010, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please convey my thanks to the Chair of Governors, pupils and staff who gave up some of their time to talk with me.

Since the inspection in June 2008, one newly qualified teacher has joined the school. There have also been some changes to the composition of the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 04–05 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards and increase achievement in mathematics.
- Improve the progress made by more-able pupils.
- Improve the consistency of the curriculum.
- Ensure a more consistent approach to marking and providing feedback to pupils.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements. Although the school is satisfactorily demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement, some aspects of its recent work are good and improving at a fast rate.

The standards of a vast majority of children are generally well below the levels expected for their age at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they reach the start of Year 1, standards are below average but a very large majority of children have made good progress during the early years. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have generally been in line with the national averages, but

the 2009 results saw a significant dip in reading and writing. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have also dipped since the previous inspection, reaching a significant low in all three areas in 2008. However, the school's current data indicate that this year's results will show a return to broadly average standards in all areas at both key stages. Other outcomes in pupils' personal development and well-being have been maintained at a good level since the previous inspection.

Teaching is now consistently satisfactory or better across all year groups, which represents progress since the previous inspection. During the inspection visit all teaching seen was characterised by excellent teacher–pupil relationships, resulting in a positive work environment where pupils show good levels of concentration, attention and interest in their work. Teachers communicate very well with pupils, which makes for effective whole-class and group working. However, there are occasions when teachers spend too much time talking to pupils at the start of the lesson, which limits the opportunities for first-hand learning experiences that will aid pupils' faster progress; this applies, in particular, to higher-attaining pupils, many of whom are capable of more challenging and independent work. Teachers' planning, although very detailed and logical in sequence, does not always make sufficient reference to the expected impact that the lesson activities will have on improving pupils' learning. Teachers' marking is consistent across the school, with some that is incisive and helpful as an aid to pupils' future learning and progress. The school has made good progress in achieving a consistent approach to its curriculum.

The overall quality of senior leadership and management continues to improve and, although it is satisfactory, a number of good or better strands are emerging. There is a very good working relationship between the headteacher and governors and an increasing and focused awareness on the key areas for improvement. Senior staff know the strengths and areas for improvement well, which is reflected in the school's most recent development plan. However, the plan underplays the increasingly active role that governors have developed since the previous inspection in monitoring provision and in challenging the school to improve further. Other external support is well focused in helping the school to recognise where improvements are still needed. The combination of all of this work demonstrates why the capacity to sustain improvement is now beginning to improve at a faster pace than previously seen.

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

Brian G Blake
Her Majesty's Inspector