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Ms Wendy King
Headteacher
Bevendean Primary School
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Dear Ms King

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bevendean Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, parents, governors and colleagues from the school and the local authority who contributed.

There have been changes among the staff since the last inspection, with a number of new staff joining the school in September 2010. In some cases class teachers have taken on different year groups and new posts have been created in the senior leadership team.

As a result of the inspection on 11 May 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. 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.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although staff and pupils understand that the focus is now more strongly upon learning and progress and on raising attainment, the full impact of this has yet to be seen. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school has remained below expectation since the last inspection. However, given their starting points, pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Information held by the school shows that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Progress for the small numbers of pupils who attend the hearing support facility is individually variable. The school's method of tracking progress is now more rigorous. As result, target setting, although still providing a

degree of challenge, is more realistic than it was. School records indicate that pupils in Year 6 are more likely to achieve or even exceed the school's targets for 2011.

The school has revised and developed its system for tracking progress, enabling staff to analyse progress and tackle areas of underachievement more swiftly. Increasingly careful analysis aids the identification of pupils who could do better and suitable arrangements, including targeted learning support, are now being made. Within the senior leadership team, new coordinators for each Key Stage, as well as for numeracy, have been appointed. Those who have taken up their posts this school year have a clear understanding of their role and are already contributing to positive changes.

School leaders have addressed with vigour the monitoring of teaching and learning and they have been helped in this by consultants from the local authority. Teaching has benefitted from more collaborative approaches to working, underpinned by regular opportunities to moderate judgements about the quality of pupils' work and learning experiences. As a result, teachers make more accurate judgements about pupils' levels of attainment as well as their learning and progress. New approaches to the teaching of mathematics and a strong focus on raising attainment in writing make lessons more interesting for pupils, so that they are challenged more frequently to try as hard as they can. As one pupil said, 'We all learn here because we concentrate.' The quality of lesson planning, however, is variable and is not always used to ensure that all groups of learners are consistently given tasks that are pitched at the right level for them.

Different approaches, including the use of 'talking partners' in all classes, have greatly enhanced pupils' abilities to work independently and collaboratively. They show that they are not afraid to estimate what a solution might be to a mathematics problem or to make suggestions about a character in a story. Pupils benefit from opportunities to assess their own and others' work. They identify increasingly accurately where they have improved and what they, or others, could do to make even greater progress. Their awareness is supported well by the school's use of a marking system which includes being 'tickled pink' or having something coloured 'green for growth'. Pupils' appreciation of this approach enhances their enthusiasm for making improvements.

The governing body understands the role that it must play in supporting school improvement. Committees are clearer about their roles and responsibilities and members now speak confidently of challenge and accountability as well as support. Governors have taken effective steps to increase their involvement at a day-to-day as well as strategic level. The shared commitment to supporting the pupils and their families, sometimes in challenging circumstances, is evident. Initiatives aimed at increasing the involvement of parents and carers, including the new Dad's group, are gaining ground. An increased focus on improving the low rates of attendance is

showing some signs of impact, so that pupils are increasingly keen to take advantage of what the school has to offer.

The school has made good use of the opportunities open to it to support improvement. The local authority has a sound grasp of the key issues for improvement and is working closely with the school to address these. The school improvement partner, although relatively new to the school, is providing a good balance of support and challenge.

The headteacher has set out a clear direction for improving the school's performance and in this she is supported well by the deputy headteacher and the increasingly cohesive staff body. Pupils appreciate the changes that are being made, describing their school as 'wonderful', 'colourful' and 'getting better'. However, all concerned are aware that, as the deputy chair of governors said, 'Everybody must make progress.'

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2009.

- Accelerate pupils' progress so that it is consistently good in all subjects and all classes, including the provision of appropriate guidance to pupils on how to improve.
- Ensure pupils are always challenged to do their best, are given greater opportunities to work independently and that activities are consistently matched to meet the needs of those with different capabilities.
- Ensure governors play their required role in challenging school leaders to raise standards and achievement and the quality of provision.