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Mr Christopher Perkins
Grampian Primary School
Grampian Way
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Dear Mr Perkins

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 8 March, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body for their time and courtesy. I would like particularly to thank the pupils for the enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the school's last inspection, there have been no significant contextual changes.

As a result of the inspection on 11 December 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the previous inspection progress has accelerated throughout the school. Robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress have been instrumental in ensuring rapid and continuous improvement. This year, school assessment information for pupils in Year 6 shows that attainment has improved significantly and is broadly average in English and mathematics. This represents a sharp rise from the previous three years, where attainment has been low compared to national averages. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 in writing remains low. Lessons observed jointly with senior leaders confirm that all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress, with many making good, accelerated progress.

The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school and a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

Opportunities to share good practice are welcomed by all staff and provide mutual help and support. Across the school, teachers' planning identifies clear learning intentions, as well as different tasks and outcomes for all groups of pupils including higher attaining pupils and those who require additional support. This is ensuring that all pupils are making better progress since the last inspection and have suitably challenging work. Scrutiny of assessment data and lesson observations confirm that standards in writing are rising. A wide range of initiatives have been put in place including team teaching, which has ensured accelerated progress for many older pupils. Children demonstrate increased confidence in writing and talk enthusiastically about a wide range of regular opportunities for writing. They particularly enjoy lessons where they can link their writing to other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 children enjoyed writing instructions for making masks, linked to their Rainforest topic work. A new marking policy has been introduced. Teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments and give pointers for improvement which are precisely focused upon what is needed to improve their work. Consequently, marking is making a valuable contribution to improving progress and raising attainment. Relationships are good at all levels and behaviour is exemplary.

Effective leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage has established a dedicated staff team, committed to improving provision for every child. They have successfully reviewed the curriculum since the last inspection. As a result, children are enjoying an exciting curriculum which is supporting them in making better progress in building skills and knowledge in all six areas of learning. Careful planning is ensuring that there are excellent opportunities for Reception age children to learn in the new purpose built outdoor play area.

The headteacher's commitment to improvement is shared by all senior leaders. Leadership and management are distributed effectively across all levels of the school and this is proving to be a powerful tool for improvement. Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy are successfully developing their roles in monitoring pupils' learning through a range of activities including lesson observations and work scrutiny. In addition, they conduct half-termly pupil progress review meetings with each class teacher to monitor individual pupils' progress in detail. This is leading to important improvements being made, which are accelerating the progress pupils make through the school. For example, identification of underachieving pupils results in swift intervention through a wide range of strategies to provide the necessary additional support. The good improvement since the last inspection demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for sustained further improvement.

The governing body has worked hard to develop its role since the last inspection. They are becoming more involved in the ongoing evaluation of the school's work and are developing a clearer understanding of what needs to be done to secure the necessary improvements. For example, the curriculum committee regularly monitors pupils' progress through reviewing the outcomes of pupil progress meetings. Consequently, they are developing greater confidence in holding leaders to account.

The school receives appropriate support and challenge from the local authority. The effective work carried out by the independent School Improvement Partner has impacted well on enabling the school to make good improvements.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - Sharing the good practice that is evident in school to improve teachers' subject knowledge in teaching writing
 - Ensuring pupils write every day and record their recorded work clearly shows evidence of the different skills needed to be a good writer
 - Ensuring lessons have a clear learning intention with activities planned to match the range of learning needs
 - Marking of pupils' work which specifically identifies good features and how to improve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by:
 - Ensuring subject leaders, especially of English and mathematics, have firsthand opportunities to monitor and improve the quality of teaching
 - Taking action swiftly to rectify weaknesses when they are identified
 - Holding half-termly pupil progress meetings at which each pupils' attainment and resulting progress is checked and any necessary action taken
 - Governors becoming more involved in challenging the leadership about pupils' learning and progress.
- Improve the learning experiences for children in the Early years Foundation Stage by:
 - Providing more opportunities for active learning for Reception age children, especially in the outdoor environment
 - Ensuring children have sufficient opportunities to develop skills in the shape, space and measure and creative development strands of learning.