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Mrs Marie Corbett
Headteacher
Invicta Primary School
Invicta Road
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Dear Mrs Corbett

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011, 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 who met with me, and the members of the governing body and local authority officer who attended the feedback.

Since the last inspection one teacher has resigned their post and two teachers have been appointed. In September 2011 the school will grow in size and there will be two Reception classes.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 November 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.

The school's data show that in 2010 pupils' attainment was similar to that of previous years and broadly average. Teachers' assessments of the current Year 6 pupils show that the achievement of this group of pupils has improved and their attainment in English and mathematics is now above average. This pattern of improvement is evident throughout the school. More pupils are making better progress and reaching higher levels in all year groups. Progress is particularly strong in reading and writing. Any pupil who may be at risk of falling behind or not reaching the challenging targets of the school is identified quickly and effective interventions



are put in place to accelerate progress again. These interventions are closely monitored and appropriate steps are taken to ensure that pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can apply their new skills independently in the classroom. In all of the lessons seen during the inspection pupils were engaged and interested in their learning.

There have been significant improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has covered part of the outside area so that there are considerably more opportunities to work and play outside in all weathers. A sensory garden has been created with parents and carers so children have a quiet place to sit and enjoy a natural environment. The classrooms have been greatly adapted to support a wide range of adult- and child-initiated activities. In addition, there is a high staff ratio on offer to children in the Nursery and Reception classes with the flexibility to create smaller age-related groups when this is appropriate. The children are clearly benefitting from these arrangements. They are confident and are learning to apply themselves well. They are choosing from the stimulating activities on offer to learn and practise their skills. For example, during the visit children were developing their writing skills through composing letters to Goldilocks, recording what other children had for breakfast, drawing designs for their building as well as independently making up their own writing and recording ideas. All of this is carried out in an atmosphere where learning is fun and interesting and where knowledgeable adults are carefully guiding children's progress. Detailed assessment information shows that children are making better progress over time. The Early Years Foundation Stage leaders are very aware of the particular needs of the cohort and have taken effective action to address any potential areas of underachievement.

In order to improve the consistency and effectiveness of the teaching of literacy the school has adopted a published scheme and particular way of working. This means that pupils are taught in small groups with activities closely matched to their needs. Pupils are now more systematically developing their knowledge of letters and sounds, sentence structure and comprehension. Regular assessment, carried out by the coordinator, ensures that groups and activities remain appropriate. In other lessons clear expectations have been established for planning, assessment and teaching approaches, behaviour management, target setting, marking and feedback in order to bring about successful learning. Regular and detailed monitoring by the school and the School Improvement Partner shows improvements in the quality of teaching overall. Pupils' behaviour is well managed and they are developing the confidence to work independently and to take risks. However, on this visit it was clear that some inconsistencies remain. The best learning took place when the learning 'question' was very clear, focused on throughout the session and encouraged high involvement. Pupils learned most effectively when teachers and learning support assistants gave careful guidance or corrected misconceptions and were finely tuned to the needs of individuals. Learning was more variable when activities or teachers' questioning were too general and asked pupils to rehearse or talk about concepts they had already grasped and therefore did not sufficiently challenge pupils to acquire new skills or knowledge. All pupils now have individual



targets for learning in literacy and mathematics, work is marked regularly and a new approach to developing handwriting is being implemented. The school is aware that the next step is to ensure that these strategies are being used consistently and effectively in all classes and having continuous impact on learning.

The school has very effectively built its capacity in a number of ways. There is a high level of commitment to the vision of a community, inclusive school with an emphasis on developing active, creative pupils with strong social and emotional skills. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are ambitious for the school. They have a clear approach and have developed efficient systems to ensure that they have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are very well supported by knowledgeable senior leaders who have successfully implemented changes which have led to improved outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. New subject leaders are developing the skills necessary to monitor effectively, evaluate pupils' progress and support colleagues. They are already leading suitable improvement initiatives. The school's considerable investment in the professional development of all its staff means that everyone is encouraged to expand their skills and contribute to the school's improved provision and to the pupils' more effective learning. Governors are well informed. Parents and carers spoken to are very pleased with the school, recognise recent improvements and feel that communication is good. Pupils say that the school is a 'happy place' where 'there are friends for everyone' and 'adults really care for you'.

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

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching in all classes to that of the best practice by:
 - improving the match of activities in lessons to meet the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring assessment information about pupils is consistently used to plan next steps in their learning
 - building the confidence of pupils in their learning so that they can work more independently and improve their own work.
- Extend the opportunities for children in the Reception class to access the outdoor curriculum at all times and to be able to make their own choices and learn independently.