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Wednesday 24 February 2010

Miss Margaret Rimmer  
Kingsdown School  
Snakes Lane  
Southend on Sea  
SS2 6XT

Dear Miss Rimmer

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 23 February 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Thank you to the Chair of the Governors, an advisory teacher for the visually impaired, senior leaders and leaders of curriculum teams for taking part in meetings. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of the teachers and pupils.

The school has had one part of the new building opened and another new part was closed because it is not safe to be used by pupils or staff. The older parts of the school have been updated. A few Key Stage 4 teachers have left because the school no longer teaches this age group.

As a result of the inspection on the 25 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- Ensure that senior leaders and governors rigorously analyse school's data so that they keep a close eye on the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Make sure that teaching, learning and planning meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with complex learning difficulties.
- Increase the effectiveness of the curriculum learning teams by clarifying their roles and responsibilities and by setting clear timelines in which to work.
- Produce agreed standards against which the performance of the outreach provision and all aspects of the sensory service can be evaluated.



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.

Achievement is satisfactory from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 9. Pupils start at the school with very low levels of skills and most make sound progress in key areas of learning. A few pupils make better than expected progress. The school has made significant improvements in the way it monitors pupils' progress. As a result, the school has better evidence to prove that pupils' progress is appropriate, in light of their considerable special education needs and/or disabilities. For example, one quarter of pupils with highly complex needs make good progress and most make sound progress. Senior leaders carefully evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils. For instance, they analyse thoughtfully achievement made by boys and girls and can show that they make similar progress. All pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily.

Half way through the taught year progress meetings are held between senior leaders and class teachers to discuss individual pupils' progress. These meetings are not recorded fully and so they do not always identify which pupils make better or less than expected progress and what extra strategies could be used to support their learning. Governors have improved their involvement in monitoring the work of the school. For example, they regularly come in and observe lessons. They are more effective in analysing school data and have rightly asked for an overview sheet to be created to show how different groups of pupils progress.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved considerably and are good. This is because staff support pupils' personal development positively. From the moment pupils arrive in the morning they are encouraged effectively to be independent. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They settle quickly into working in the classrooms and concentrate effectively on their learning.

Teaching and learning have improved adequately. A considerable amount of teaching observed during the visit was satisfactory and allowed pupils to make sound progress. Generally, practical activities are used appropriately to develop pupils' basic skills. In one outstanding lesson seen, pupils improved their writing skills extremely well because learning activities developed finger and hand control very carefully. Feedback for pupils was excellent and so they learnt what they were doing particularly well with their fingers as they made marks in flour or on paper with pens. Planning is improving suitably. Some lessons are planned carefully so that everyone knows what the expected outcomes are for each pupil, including those with complex needs. In a few sessions, insufficient time is taken to explain to pupils fully what skills or knowledge they are expected to develop in the session. This means that feedback from staff during and at the end of the session does not always explain in detail how pupils have been successful and what they could do to improve.



Effective curriculum learning teams led by senior leaders ensure all areas of learning are monitored rigorously. Leaders have suitable time to evaluate their subjects and develop them. A good senior leadership team is in place and with the support of other staff are working effectively to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. This is because the school development plan is used well to drive change and deadlines are set appropriately.

Safeguarding is effective and so pupils feel safe in school. All necessary checks are carried out on staff and child protection training is kept up to date.

Evaluation of the outreach services has improved considerably. For instance, targets against which the performance of the advisory teacher for visual impairment can be measured, are agreed each year and time is made to discuss how successfully they have been met.

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

Jackie Cousins  
**Additional Inspector**

