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8 December 2010

Mrs Brown  
Ash Croft Primary School  
Deep Dale Lane  
Sinfin Moor  
Derby  
DE24 3HF

Dear Mrs Brown

**Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Ash Croft Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 7 December, 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 Chair of Governors for their time and courtesy. I would like to particularly thank the pupils for the most 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 12 May 2010 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

My visits to lessons confirmed that the school's analysis of information on pupils' performance is accurate. Since the previous inspection, progress has started to improve, particularly in Key Stage 2. Effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress have been instrumental in ensuring this improvement. Tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is becoming more detailed and focused on groups or individuals who are underachieving. Consequently, the number of these pupils are gradually reducing as underachievement is dealt with more quickly and more successfully by the support given to help them catch-up. However, there is still work to do on this, as some younger pupils have a slower rate of progress than older pupils. Pupils' personal learning targets in English and mathematics are being used effectively. Discussion with pupils confirmed that these are supporting them in knowing the next steps in their learning. This year, school assessment information for pupils in Year 6 shows that overall attainment is broadly average. This represents rapid improvement from the previous year, where attainment was low compared to national averages.

A range of both external and internal professional development opportunities have been undertaken by all teachers. However, although there are now more good lessons, teaching and learning remains satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good there is detailed planning, clear learning intentions, interesting activities and lively questioning to sustain pupils' interest and encourage active involvement. In these lessons, independent work is well matched to pupils' learning needs because teachers are effectively using assessment information to inform their planning. Where teaching is less than good, progress is often limited because teachers are not using assessment information well enough to identify precise criteria for all groups of pupils to achieve. The implementation of a new marking policy is supporting pupils in knowing how to improve their work. Teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments and give them helpful pointers for improvement which are increasingly focused upon what is needed to reach their personal targets. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to evaluate their own work, as well as that of their peers. In all lessons pupils worked hard and displayed extremely positive attitudes to learning. Relationships and behaviour were consistently good.

A newly formed and highly motivated team are at the heart of the good improvements being made in the Foundation Stage. All children, especially boys, are making better progress in developing positive attitudes to learning and in early literacy and numeracy skills. An excellent start has been made to improving systems for assessing and recording children's progress through 'learning journals'. These are being shared with parents as a means of involving them in their children's progress. A thorough audit of staffing and resources has been carried out. As a result, children are now enjoying an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and resources are being used more effectively to support children's learning.

A revised senior leadership team has been established since the last inspection, with clear roles and responsibilities. They have a clear picture of what the school needs to do to improve and a shared vision for on-going improvement. The increasing effectiveness of this team is starting to have an impact. Additionally, subject leaders in English and mathematics, as well as the governing body, are now making a good contribution to self-evaluation, monitoring and strategic planning. Consequently, the school's capacity for sustained improvement in the future is improving.

The comprehensive and detailed Statement of Action devised by the local authority is ensuring that the school receives good support and challenge from a range of local authority staff, including consultants and the school improvement partner.

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 May 2010.**

- Improve the attainment and achievement of pupils across the school by:
  - making sure that all groups of pupils make faster progress in English and mathematics
  - using the tracking systems to identify and provide additional support for underachieving pupils
  - setting clear targets for pupils' progress and attainment which are based on previous performance.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that all teachers:
  - use assessment information effectively to inform their planning so that the work is matched well to the learning needs of individual pupils
  - ensure that pupils know and understand how to improve their work and make better progress
  - agree and share the best practice in teaching and learning.
- Develop the quality and consistency of leadership and management by:
  - reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team so that it is more effective in driving school improvements
  - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluation
  - developing the roles of subject leaders so that they provide effective support for teachers.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early years Foundation Stage by:
  - monitoring and evaluating provision and implementing a plan of improvement
  - improving the progress of children, especially boys, in language, number and social skills
  - making better use of assessment information to inform teaching so that it meets the different needs of the children
  - ensuring that resources and staff are used more effectively to support children's learning.