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30 September 2010

Mrs Susan Wilcox
Crown Wood Primary School
Opladen Way
Crown Wood
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 0PE

Dear Mrs Wilcox

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Crown Wood Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 September 2010 and for the time you gave to our telephone discussion, the preparatory meeting and for information you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks your staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and pupils.

Since the last inspection there have been changes to staffing at the school. Several teachers have changed year groups and one member of staff has taken on new middle leadership responsibilities. One middle leader has returned after a period of long-term illness. A member of staff is currently on maternity leave and one member of staff is leaving to take promotion as a deputy headteacher. A new bursar and two newly qualified teachers joined the school in September 2010.

As a result of the inspection on 14–15 January 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 inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Disruption to staffing, both at the time of the last inspection and over recent months, has been detrimental to securing greater consistency in the quality of teaching and levels of progress across the school. Leaders have implemented a new monitoring system to track pupils' progress and this is starting to give teachers up-to-date information about individuals and groups of pupils. Previously inaccurate teacher assessments have been addressed and more accurate information is giving a clearer picture of progress within classes and across key stages. However, staff are

not interrogating the data sufficiently well to plan lessons which meet the differing needs of pupils. Lessons are not structured to consistently match work for the less able and more able pupils.

Pupils enter the school with skills below, and in some cases well below, those expected for their age. While the progress of most pupils is good at Key Stage 1 and attainment is broadly average, progress of pupils throughout Key Stage 2 is very mixed. Tracking data show a few pockets of good progress and too many groups who underachieve. An increased focus on challenging the most able pupils has generated some success, with teacher assessments for Key Stage 2 in 2010 showing a higher proportion of pupils achieving the Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Conversely, the proportion attaining Level 4 in English has declined to below that found nationally. Despite a rise in attainment at Level 5, the school's results for English, mathematics and science still remain below attainment found nationally. The school did not meet its targets for Level 5 or the targets set for levels of progress in 2010. Progress of the most able and by the large majority of pupils is not rising quickly enough across Key Stage 2. Evidence from lesson observations shows that while there is some improvement in progress across Key Stage 2 this is not consistent and the use of assessment information to plan for the needs of all pupils is not embedded in teachers' planning. Improving attainment in writing remains a high priority across all classes this year.

Marking shows some improvement and leaders have used the new marking policy to start to embed better practice in helping pupils learn how to improve. Pupils say that most marking helps them know what to do improve through next step targets. Good-quality marking purposefully moves pupils' learning forward but where marking is more cursory pupils don't always understand how to improve. Pupils like the target boards in classrooms which they say remind them of their targets and are being used more by teachers in lessons. While the large majority know their targets they do not know their National Curriculum levels. This makes the journey through targets redundant because pupils do not understand what the end goal is.

The roles of three new middle leaders are clearly defined but their training in observing lessons and standardising judgements is at an early stage. Monitoring of teaching and learning by all leaders has increased and observations are now a regular feature of school improvement but criteria to observe lessons are not commonly understood, nor rooted in precise detail about learning in lessons. Lesson observation forms are not sufficiently focused on attainment and progress so commentary to teachers is not sharp enough to help them know how to accelerate the progress of all pupils.

Target setting is not challenging enough. Senior leaders are beginning to determine patterns of underachievement but reacting to this has been slow in affecting changes in the curriculum and teaching methods. Senior leaders rightly acknowledge that there remains inconsistency in the overall quality of teaching. This means that pupils often receive an irregular pattern of some good, satisfactory, occasional

inadequate and outstanding lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2. This causes pupil progress to falter and creates legacy issues for staff who have to remedy the impact of weaker teaching. The school has not met the local authority target of securing at least 80% of teaching at a good level by July 2010. Pupils' behaviour is mostly conducive to learning but pupils lose interest when work lacks challenge.

The governing body has not held leaders fully to account for the significantly below-average standards in English and mathematics. A lack of demanding questioning about progress of groups and individuals, especially at Key Stage 2, has led to inadequate progress and limited challenge about the variable quality of teaching which has had a detrimental impact on attainment. Minutes of meetings do not show suitable urgency in driving forward the areas for improvement.

The school has responded well to good support from the local authority. The local authority's statement of action was fit for purpose and has supported the school in setting priorities and measurable targets for improvement. Through a partnership with a local primary school, leaders are exploring exemplars of good practice. Input from advisers working alongside teachers has helped develop new ideas for planning, but there is neither significant nor sustained impact on raising achievement for every pupil.

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

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 in order to raise their attainment by the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that the more able pupils, in particular, are challenged to achieve as well as they can do so that more reach the higher levels
 - embedding new tracking and monitoring systems to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.

- Ensure that all pupils are clear about how to improve their work by:
 - using marking consistently to show them how to make improvement
 - using targets effectively to support and challenge all learners.

- Develop the skills of leaders at all levels in improving teaching and raising achievement.