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24 February 2011

Mr K P Dyson
Headteacher
St Andrew's CofE Primary School
Mardale Avenue
Orford
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Cheshire
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Dear Mr Dyson,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 February 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Would you pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the representative from the local authority whom I met.

There have been significant changes to staff since the previous inspection particularly in Key Stage 2. Four new teachers have been appointed and one teacher is currently on maternity leave. The school has enhanced the safety of the playground by the provision of electronic gates.

As a result of the inspection on 10 February 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 has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In 2010, the national tests results at the end of Key Stage 2 improved. In mathematics, attainment reached the national average. In English, despite improvement to levels of reading, attainment remained below average due to the low standards attained in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment remained below national averages in both subjects. Generally girls reached higher levels than boys. Pupils known to be entitled to free school meals continued to attain particularly well. Pupils' progress in mathematics improved, although in English it dipped slightly. Teacher assessments show that attainment and progress in science improved significantly. Lesson planning in science has also improved. In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress and attainment were maintained at around the levels achieved in 2009.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

In the four lessons observed in Key Stage 2, pupils enjoyed learning and developed skills, knowledge and understanding at a level appropriate for their age. The majority made satisfactory progress. In the few instances where progress was slower, teachers did not use assessment of pupils' prior skills and abilities to personalise learning. This meant that some pupils, particularly the more able, spent too long listening to teachers and not enough time learning independently.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve attendance levels, particularly of pupils who were persistent absentees. Despite the best efforts of the school the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent rose in 2010 and remains high compared to other schools. The proportion of sessions missed due to absence also rose and is above average. The school continues to work hard with the small number of pupils involved and their families and so far this year attendance levels are slightly higher.

Pupils' understanding of the richness of the wider world has grown significantly because the effective work the school has done to develop its links with schools both in the UK and abroad. The 'Down our way' project and its partnership work with other schools have enhanced the positive impact the school has on the cohesiveness of its own and the wider community.

The school's arrangements to keep a single central register for the recruitment of staff continue to meet government recommendations. The local authority has provided satisfactory support to the school and the 'Improving Schools Programme' has proved to be particularly valuable in assisting with the development of a more-effective method of assessing pupils' progress.

The school has demonstrated a satisfactory track record of improvement, although leaders are aware that considerable work still needs to be done if it is to reach its ambitious goals. For example, currently the school's self-evaluation process, development plan, lesson observation system and programme for professional development exist as separate processes and lack sufficient coordination.

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

Dr Andrew Johnson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place 10 February 2010

- Improve learning and progress in science by:
 - adopting the good assessment, target-setting and marking practices used in the teaching of English and mathematics
 - ensuring a better match of lesson activities to the learning needs of pupils through more effective planning.

- Improve attendance further, especially that of persistent absentees.

- Broaden pupils' understanding of the richness of the wider world and their contact with it.