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Friday 5 November 2010

Mrs C Robinson
St Christopher Primary School
Allesley Old Road
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Dear Mrs Robinson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Christopher Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 3 November 2010, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I am also grateful to the pupils, parents and the Chair of the Governing Body who gave up their valuable time to speak to me.

As a result of the inspection on 4 February 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. I note that, since the last inspection, nearly half of the teachers are relatively new to the school and that you only took up your post as headteacher in September 2010.

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.

Attainment is average and improving. It dipped in 2009 but the 2010 Key Stage 2 results show that standards rose sharply and returned to where they were at the last inspection.

The children's knowledge and skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage are fairly typical of young children. National progress measures rose in 2010, and work in pupils' books and in lessons show that, as they move through the school, pupils make steady progress. Since the last inspection the school has improved the way it tracks pupils' progress. This information is used well to identify groups of pupils that require extra support.



The quality of teaching and learning seen during this monitoring inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. Typically, pupils showed interest in their work, were articulate and conducted themselves well. Good relationships between adults and pupils were evident. Adults used open-ended questioning techniques effectively to enable pupils to explain their thinking. The work given to pupils matched their needs well, but it was not always explained clearly enough by the teacher. This meant that time was wasted recapping and this hindered pupils' productivity. Indeed, the work in pupils' books shows that more should be expected of them in lessons so that they complete more than just a few lines of writing or three or four calculations. Pupils also need to set their own work out rather than rely on worksheets.

Marking shows improvement since the last inspection. It now identifies what pupils need to do next. Good examples were seen in Years 2 and 4 of pupils responding well to feedback so that their subsequent work improved. Pupils in Year 6 are also made aware in lessons of what they need to do to move up a level. The next challenge is to make sure that this good practice is consistent throughout the school, and that pupils are set targets in English and mathematics which they are expected to meet.

The work of subject leaders in taking an active role in the leadership and management of the school has developed greatly. They now drop in on lessons and check the teachers' planning, pupils' books and assessment data. The headteacher meets with staff regularly to discuss pupil progress. Teachers are held accountable and given feedback about what is going well and where development is needed. This has resulted in a change of culture where raising standards is high on the agenda. The school development plan is detailed and focuses strongly on raising pupil achievement. The headteacher is now identifying quantifiable success criteria to ensure that expectations are clear. The school has paid appropriate attention to carrying out all the required safeguarding checks on staff, members of the governing body, volunteers and visitors.

Clearly, since the last inspection there has been a determined effort by the staff, governing body and local authority to improve the school. Parents have noticed changes for the better. Overwhelmingly they said that: the new headteacher is easily accessible; pupils are keen to arrive at school on time; that the format of the school day is more structured; and a few mentioned better teaching.

The headteacher and governing body are grateful for the support received from the local authority advisers in supporting the work of the school during a period of considerable change. This has helped secure better teaching.

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

Anne Pitt
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2009

- Improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils are given activities that are not too difficult for them.
- Make certain that teachers' marking gives all pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve and reach their targets.
- Develop the role of the subject coordinators for English, mathematics and science, so that their monitoring role is focused more sharply on raising achievement and standards.