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4 February 2011
Mr J Keay
Headteacher
Wilnecote Junior School
Smithy Lane
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Dear Mr Keay

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Wilnecote Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 February 2011, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, Chair of the Governing Body and local authority representative for taking the time to talk to me. It was particularly helpful to spend part of the day with you observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and analysing assessment information.

Since the school was inspected in June 2010 a teacher and teaching assistant have left the school and a new inclusion leader has been appointed. There has been a slight increase in the proportion of pupils admitted to the school who do not speak English as their first language.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 June 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.

Senior leaders have implemented a range of strategies to tackle weaknesses in standards and achievement across the school. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and one-to-one support, booster classes and additional teaching support are helping to accelerate progress. Alongside these interventions, the school has developed a robust assessment system, so that teachers can assess pupils' work with much greater accuracy. As a result, standards across the school in reading, writing and mathematics are much closer to national averages and a greater proportion of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make similar progress to their peers.

While standards in writing are rising, they remain below the expected levels in nearly a third of classes. Moderated teacher assessments in December 2010 indicate that rates of progress in writing are increasing and the large majority of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. The school is aware that more work remains to be done to accelerate progress in writing, particularly in Year 5.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Staff have received tailored support through coaching, professional development and from local authority consultants to improve their practice. A number of staff have recently benefited from attending National College of School Leadership accredited courses. The latest evaluation of the school's work undertaken by the local authority indicates that the proportion of satisfactory lessons is improving. However, the proportion of lessons judged to be good remains some distance from the local authority's aspirational target. During the inspection, lessons sampled were judged to be satisfactory overall.

Lessons are focused on clear learning objectives with activities suitably matched to the needs of the pupils. In the best lessons observed, the pace of learning was brisk and teachers used a range of strategies to engage pupils fully in their learning, such as 'bubble speak' and 'thumbs up'. Teachers helpfully model writing skills in lessons and pupils are given regular opportunities to develop different types of writing across the curriculum. On occasion, teachers talk too much in lessons and this limits pupils' opportunities to practise their writing skills and reflect on their learning. Work is regularly marked and teachers are beginning to provide useful guidance to help pupils improve their work. The quality of presentation in pupils' books is improving although basic errors in spelling are not routinely corrected.

Assessment is used increasingly effectively to set reading, writing and mathematics targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Targets are clearly written in child-friendly language and are reviewed every six weeks. Pupils report that they particularly enjoy the challenge of moving from bronze to silver and gold levels as they achieve their targets. The school has recently introduced a simple bookmark system to guide pupils in what they need to do to achieve the next level. This initiative is at an early stage of development. All pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities now have targets. The quality of individual education plans has improved since the last inspection.

The school has formulated a robust action plan for raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The headteacher provides clear, purposeful leadership that is improving outcomes for pupils. He is ably supported by a dedicated senior leadership team. The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose. It is being closely followed by local authority officers who are working with the school, and has made a satisfactory contribution to improving the quality of education at Wilnecote. Staff report that the quality of support received from local authority consultants has been good.

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

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- As a matter of urgency, raise the quality of teaching to good across the school by:
 - making even better use of the coaching and leadership programmes to raise teachers' expectations of different groups of pupils in all subjects
 - achieving consistency in the way all assessment information is used in planning and target setting
 - adapting lessons to meet pupils' different needs at all times, and reviewing pupils' targets more frequently so that the pace of learning is accelerated as quickly as possible
 - ensuring pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have targets to develop their learning and their progress is rigorously evaluated.

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - moving pupils onto writing tasks sooner in lessons and giving them more opportunities to write at length in literacy and in different subjects
 - modelling writing more precisely for pupils, including in marking, and giving them time to consolidate their skills within different types of writing
 - helping pupils to understand their targets better, and how they can achieve them faster by using their writing skills in every piece of writing they do.