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16 February 2011

Mr M Frame
The Headteacher
Stuart Road Primary School
Palmerston Street
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Dear Mr Frame

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Stuart Road Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 February 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the chair of the governing body, staff and pupils who gave up their time to meet with me at short notice.

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 11 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

good progress in making improvements.

and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment in national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was average, and was higher than in 2009 when it was below average. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of the work of current pupils show that they are on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2011 and 2012. This is confirmed by information from the effective systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress

introduced by the school since the last inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2010 was below average in reading and writing, and lower than in 2009. The reasons for this have been explored and action taken to reverse the trend. Observation of a lesson and scrutiny of the work of current pupils in Year 2 show this action to have been successful. Pupils are developing as confident writers and are producing accurate, extended pieces of work. Other evidence, such as pupils' enthusiasm for school and the depth of their understanding of their targets and of how to make better progress, suggests that pupils' overall achievement is improving.

In the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. For example, teachers treated pupils with respect and acknowledged their growing maturity. Pupils responded very well, quickly following instructions and getting on with their work. Work was challenging, such as in Year 2 when higher attaining pupils were asked how many tents would be required by a group of 28 campers using 5-person tents. Many successfully solved the problem. This level of challenge is now a common feature of the teaching, although on rare occasions opportunities to develop a point even further are missed. Challenging but achievable individual targets, pupils' assessment of their own and each other's work and regular monitoring of progress by teacher and pupil are all techniques that contribute to pupils' growing confidence in their own abilities. Pupils also know how much progress they need to make over time in order to attain national expectations. They greatly enjoy this approach to learning. To quote one pupil, 'We are trusted to manage our own learning.' Lessons proceed at a fast pace. Teachers make it clear how much time is available for a task and stick to this, so pupils work quickly. This is made possible through pupils' enthusiasm and very good behaviour. On a few occasions, however, teachers talk for too long and pupils become a little restless.

The school responded positively and with energy to the recommendations of the last inspection. Senior leaders now use a variety of methods to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. This includes thematic approaches, such as evaluations of the teaching of reading and mental mathematics. Data are analysed to examine the progress of individuals and groups, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or the children of armed service families. This work shows that there is little distinction in the progress of groups of pupils, and timely interventions are successfully made when individual progress slows. Self-evaluation is accurate and is used well to identify areas for improvement, such as in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. The school realises that there is a need to review where it places itself in respect of the national criteria for school effectiveness. The governing body monitors the school's work with increasing effectiveness and rigour, for example through links with individual classes and through better understanding of data and its use. There is no doubt that teaching and, hence, pupils' progress have improved significantly since the last inspection. Strong and effective subject leadership has made an important contribution. These factors demonstrate the school's improved capacity to achieve even more, which, as is rightly acknowledged by both the governing body and staff, has been assisted greatly by high-quality training and support from the local authority.

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

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "Paul Sadler", with a long, sweeping underline.

Paul Sadler
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise pupils' standards and achievement by June 2011 by:
 - ensuring more lessons have high expectations and good pace
 - providing pupils with clear, individual targets for improvement.
- Monitor teaching more rigorously by July 2010 to address areas of weakness.