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3 March 2011

Ms Jane Mason
Headteacher
Edgar Stammers Primary School
Harden Road
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Dear Ms Mason

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Edgar Stammers Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 March 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 for their help during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 8–9 December 2009, 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.

Pupils' attainment in 2010 at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 remained low overall. However, while still below the national average, attainment rose in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and in English at the end of Key Stage 2, although mathematics remained static. This represents an improvement on results in 2009 and is a reflection of the steadily improving progress made by pupils across the school. There is a robust tracking procedure in place and this is effectively being used by senior leaders and teachers to monitor pupils' progress. This is providing the information to allow staff to target areas of weakness in pupils' skills and knowledge and increase the pace of pupils' learning. However, school data show that the progress of pupils is inconsistent both across year groups and in different subjects. As examples, progress in English and mathematics is weaker in Year 3 than in other year groups. In Year 4, progress in reading and mathematics is better than writing. In Year 5, progress in reading is better than writing and mathematics. This

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inconsistency in progress leads to variations in attainment for pupils of the same age in different subjects. The school is using strategies such as small group work and individual tuition sessions to remedy these difficulties. As a result, attainment is beginning to rise and pupils' progress increase. There has also been a focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, particularly in lessons where pupils are given writing tasks. This is beginning to improve pupils' writing skills and provide them with opportunities to write in a variety of styles for different purposes.

The quality of teaching is improving with some good lessons observed during the inspection. However, there are still some areas where it remains satisfactory. This contributes to the inconsistency in the progress of pupils. The consistency of marking in providing feedback is improving and this is contributing to pupils' increased rates of progress. Teachers know their pupils individually and plan well to meet their needs. More-able pupils are being identified and provided with more challenging tasks in lessons. However, this has not yet had a full impact on their attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers were observed working hard to fully engage pupils in their learning. However, on occasions, pupils do not have the self-reliance to respond in question and answer sessions and this leads to a dependence on the teacher to provide ideas, particularly in the writing sessions observed.

The improvements since the last inspection are mainly due to the headteacher successfully working with, and delegating responsibilities to, a relatively new senior leadership team, including a new deputy headteacher. Monitoring of data and activities such as the scrutiny of pupils' work and informal visits to lessons has improved the accountability of staff for the performance of pupils across the different phases of the school. However, a formal programme of lesson observations by all the senior leadership team has yet to be put in place. The senior leadership team are sharing good practice and working effectively together to try and ensure that pupils make consistent progress across all year groups. Also, senior leaders have continued to work with outside agencies to provide professional support for staff to improve their teaching skills. These initiatives are beginning to increase the rate of pupils' learning and raise attainment across the school.

Pupils' attendance is average, although when the school does encounter difficulties, it works hard to ensure that families who face challenges are well supported so that pupils attend school regularly.

Behaviour was satisfactory and similar to that found at the last inspection. Good behaviour was observed in lessons, often in response to more engaging teaching.

The local authority has provided appropriate support through the senior School Improvement Partner and the use of advisory consultants in English and mathematics. They have worked with the senior leadership team to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills to ensure a strong focus on improving pupils' progress and raising attainment.

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

James Henry
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and further improve pupils' learning and progress by ensuring that most teaching is good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - improving the consistency of teachers' marking so that all pupils are provided with good guidance on how to improve their work
 - providing sufficient challenge to all higher-attaining pupils
 - providing opportunities for staff to observe particularly effective teaching.

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects
 - encouraging pupils to take more pride in their work, especially their presentation.

- Ensure consistency in the rigorous monitoring of provision by senior leaders by:
 - providing opportunities to enhance the skills of all senior leaders through the sharing of good practice.