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Mrs J Powell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Powell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Long Mead Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to the pupils who contributed to the visit.

Since the last inspection, the school has become part of a federation with a local secondary school and the number of pupils on roll is increasing.

As a result of the inspection on 9 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.

The shortcomings identified in the last inspection are being soundly addressed. Good progress has been made in providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with opportunities to develop writing skills. Focused time is devoted to developing links between sounds and letters, whilst daily sessions enable the children to develop fine motor skills.

In all lessons observed, teachers consistently used written reinforcement to ensure pupils know the learning objective and how it progresses their learning. This feeds well into establishing for pupils the success criteria against which they can self-evaluate. Further positive development has been in the curriculum for reinforcing



writing skills. New themes such as the Heroes and Villains topic are motivating pupils, particularly boys, to write. When studying history, the pupils write about Ancient Greece and they write acrostic poems in religious education lessons. There are missed opportunities in curriculum plans to highlight in all subjects where writing and speaking and listening skills can be reinforced.

The school's capacity to sustain improvement is reinforced by the sound improvements made in lesson planning. Good opportunities are being provided for pupils to share ideas and to evaluate their own and others' writing. In the stronger lessons observed, the planning identified the prior learning of pupils and built appropriate challenge from that point. However, this remains inconsistent, with assessment information not always being appropriately used to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities. Too much emphasis is placed on what the pupils are to do rather than the learning expectations.

From well below expected levels on entry to the Nursery, the children make good progress but still leave Reception with literacy skills below the expected levels. By the end of Year 6, attainment in writing remains low, a legacy of past underachievement. More accountable staff and pupil progress meetings are resulting in quicker identification of any pupils requiring additional support. Consequently, attainment and progress in writing is moving upwards, for example in Year 1. Given their starting points, this reflects satisfactory progress for pupils. The quality and quantity of writing are improving although there is still room for more emphasis on developing a richer range of vocabulary in pupils' written work.

Satisfactory capacity to improve is also in evidence in the improvements to monitoring. Monitoring is shared between leaders at all levels; the positive effect of the federation is demonstrated by senior managers from both schools now sharing observations and other monitoring activities. A wide range of strategies are employed by leaders and governors to monitor the school. Lesson observations provide teachers with helpful feedback and the impact is reflected by the increasing number of good lessons. There remains an insufficient focus in lesson observations on following up recommendations for improvement from the previous visit. Accurate self-evaluation leads to appropriate development objectives being identified; writing is one such area. The school now uses more precise objectives and targets against which it can measure success, for example 'Improve writing from 47% to 55% at level 4'. This is allowing monitoring to be more focused on pupil outcomes. Leaders refer directly to the impact of changes in teaching on pupils' learning and progress. However, there remain some inconsistencies. For example, not all monitoring reports include evidence from lesson observations, nor does work scrutiny include aspects such as the progress of different pupil groups. Observations nevertheless confirm that the school accurately judges the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory overall.

Support from the local authority has been effective in providing consultants and support. The action plan for the school is detailed and regularly reviewed.



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

Michael Pye
Additional Inspector



Annex

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

- Improve standards in writing by:
 - increasing opportunities for writing in lessons across the curriculum
 - improving the quality of lesson planning to make better use of assessment information and ensure that lessons are tailored precisely to help pupils of all abilities reach the next steps in learning
 - improving pupils' understanding of how they can improve their writing by sharing clear criteria to enable them to judge their own success in lessons
 - improving provision for early writing skills in the EYFS.

- Improve the quality of strategic planning by:
 - ensuring that objectives for improving writing attainment set out precisely how pupils will improve their skills
 - ensuring that all monitoring activities focus on the outcomes achieved as a result of actions taken
 - involving leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring outcomes.

