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12 Apr 2011

Mr J Power
Headteacher
Chapel Street Primary School
Chapel Street
Levenshulme
Manchester
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Dear Mr Power,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Chapel Street Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 April 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 School Improvement Partner, Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and staff who spoke with me.

As a result of the inspection in March 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 last inspection found that standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 were low because of gaps in pupils' learning. A relatively high number of pupils join the school later than usual, some of whom are at early stages of learning English. The whole-school drive to improve assessment and provide interesting opportunities for pupils to write from experience is starting to raise attainment. The school did not participate in the 2010 Year 6 standardised assessment tests but undertook a number of teacher assessments. These indicate that writing improved significantly bringing pupils' attainment in English closer to the national average. However, attainment in mathematics was similar to 2009, when it was well below average. Standards of attainment show improvement in the current Year 6 cohort with approximately two-thirds on track to achieve level 4 in both English and mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection and in line with the school's ambitious targets based on pupils' prior attainment.

Teaching continues to ensure pupils enjoy learning and that they make similar progress in lessons as they did at the last inspection. This is the case for pupils from the many different ethnic groups represented in the school. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their work as teachers provide more opportunities for them to reflect on their learning and identify where they need further help. Peer and self-assessment has been successfully

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introduced in several classes, providing a model for further development. Most pupils can recall their learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics. However, their understanding of how to use targets to improve their work differs because the approach to setting and using targets is more effective in some classes than it is in others.

The quality of marking and feedback to pupils has improved since the last inspection but the revised policy is at an early stage of implementation and is not consistently implemented across the school. Teachers now provide pupils with an indication of what has been done well and what could be improved each time work is marked. There is some very effective practice, which gives pupils specific and easy to understand feedback and ensures that it is followed through to subsequent pieces of work. However, in some instances, the comments leave pupils uncertain about what they need to do, stating for example 'punctuation needs more care'. In some classes, writing in other subjects is marked infrequently meaning that pupils can reinforce misunderstandings without checks.

Staff have a strong commitment to promoting pupils' personal development and providing high quality care and support. Both staff and pupils are extremely inclusive, friendly and welcoming, so that all feel safe and happy at school. The majority of pupils attend well but overall absence is higher than average because some families take extended holidays during term time. The last inspection identified punctuality as an area requiring improvement and the school has taken effective steps in tackling this issue. Family workers are monitoring late arrival and supporting those who are persistently late. Pre-registration breakfast and information and communication technology (ICT) clubs and daily 'wake-up, shake-up' sessions are providing additional incentives for children to arrive earlier. These initiatives have reduced the incidence of late arrival over the last year.

Staff have a very good understanding of the local community and respect the needs of pupils with many different cultural backgrounds and faiths. Pupils also show respect for those who have cultural traditions different from their own and have a good understanding of global issues. The school itself is a highly cohesive community and leaders are now promoting community cohesion beyond the school much more strongly. They have established links with a number of other schools and local organisations to enrich pupils' experiences and promote their understanding of rights and responsibilities. Members of the governing body have made a strong contribution to developments through improving communication channels with parents and carers. Pupils are proud of the recent school-led campaign to keep the local swimming pool open, which involved the whole community.

All staff are highly motivated to help the pupils achieve their best. Leaders and the governing body are providing a strong steer to bring about consistently good practice in assessment and there is some very effective practice on which to build. The good capacity for improvement identified at the last inspection has been strengthened further. The school has not received any additional support from the local authority but has received good quality advice and challenge from the School Improvement Partner and support from other local authority services as part of its core entitlement.

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

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 to at least the national average by:
 - consistently providing pupils with clear criteria by which to gauge their success in lessons
 - involving the pupils more in assessing the quality of their work
 - improving the quality of marking so that it provides pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work.

- Improve the punctuality of the significant minority of latecomers to school.

- Formalise the analysis of the impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion and develop a plan for promoting it further.