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Mr Branwell
Headteacher
Linton Primary School
Main Street
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Swadlincote
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Dear Mr Branwell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Linton Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 May 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 pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the local authority representatives.

Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant changes of staffing and staffing structures. Two teachers have recently taken up key acting posts to form the senior leadership team. The headteacher is currently managing the Early Years Foundation Stage. He will be leaving at the end of August 2011. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up her post in September 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 22 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:

inadequate progress in making improvements

and

inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The key factor influencing these judgments is that, despite remedying some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection which include recent improvement in some areas of teaching and learning and the curriculum, ongoing

September 2010



developments remain fragile. This is due to lack of stability in staffing, particularly at senior management level. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that the school has not been able to raise attainment and accelerate the progress for all pupils in English, mathematics and science across the school. Pupils in Year 6 are supported well through additional booster classes and consequently, they are making satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 1 to 5 make less progress, particularly those in Years 1 and 2. This progress is not sufficient to eradicate the recent history of underachievement in the short term. There are a growing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have recently joined the school, a considerable number of whom are in Year 6. They have settled well and are making satisfactory progress from their starting points.

All lesson observations were undertaken jointly with you. Teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to inadequate. In some more practical lessons, where pupils have an opportunity to work in groups, they show that they can work enthusiastically, cooperate well and show real enjoyment in their learning. Pupils recognise that more is being expected of them and feel that they are learning more than they have in the past. In some lessons, teachers use questioning techniques well to get pupils to extend their responses. Pupils say that they enjoy some of their lessons because they are more interesting and because they have an opportunity to work independently and initiate their own ideas. However, some pupils, for example the more able, are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to achieve challenging targets. The school has a good level of data on all its pupils. This information, however, is not always used effectively by teachers to plan their lessons so that the needs of individual pupils, particularly the more able, are fully met. In most lessons observed, teachers did not have high enough expectations, nor did they adapt their lessons to match the needs of individual pupils precisely. Pupils have good relationships with staff and behave well. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe, knowing that there is always someone to turn to if they have any concerns. Marking in books is inconsistent. The best poses questions and provides pupils with detailed guidance on what they have done well and what they must do to make further progress. However, where teachers pose questions pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond.

The curriculum is now matched better to the specific learning needs and capabilities of pupils. It offers more opportunities for pupils to write extensively and independently across a broader range of subjects. Pupils are provided with more challenging tasks in literacy, particularly in Years 5 and 6, so that they can apply their skills across the curriculum. Pupils work on a range of topics which include, for example, World War 2, where they write extended stories exploring the feelings of soldiers by 'putting themselves into their shoes'. Pupils' work shows that they are becoming confident in writing which is both investigative and imaginative. Pupils also enjoy reading a range of texts that engages their interest and to which they can relate. Pupils say that reading more widely is helping them to produce longer pieces of writing which are much more creative. The school continues to develop the science curriculum through a range of strategies including suspended curriculum



days to enable pupils to make better use of their investigative and practical skills. This and other work engages pupils' interest, encourages independence and challenges them.

You have worked hard to introduce some successful initiatives. For example, much effort has gone into improving the provision for those in the Early Years Foundation Stage which you have been managing. Since the last inspection, the outdoor area has been improved significantly and is having a positive impact on improving the progress children make both in the Nursery and Reception. Other recently introduced strategies, for example, helping pupils to work more independently, are also beginning to have a positive impact. The recently formed leadership team is working well together but it has not had long enough to have an impact on improving overall teaching and learning. The senior leadership team remains fragile due to wider staffing issues. Although the roles of middle leaders are beginning to be strengthened, they are not yet able to hold staff to account for pupils' progress, nor are they able to set a clear direction for improving their areas of responsibility. They have not made any progress in developing a plan which shows quantifiable and timed targets, so that progress is measurable and can be reported accurately.

The leadership and management team and the governors have continued to respond well to external support, particularly for literacy, numeracy and the monitoring of teaching and learning. The school is still at a relatively early stage in its 'journey of improvement' which is hampered by the instability in key posts. The school recognises that there is still considerable work to be done to ensure consistency and coherence in overall school improvement and to raise overall 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

Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science by:
 - expanding the curriculum so there are more opportunities for pupils to write extensively and independently across a broader range of subjects
 - providing more challenging tasks in mathematics so pupils can apply their number skills to problems solving
 - extending pupils' learning in science and making investigative work more engaging and challenging.
- Improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching by:
 - raising expectations in lessons so that tasks place greater demands on pupils and are ambitious and challenging
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to develop independence and initiate their own ideas to extend their learning
 - identify through sharper assessments those pupils who are capable of exceeding age-related levels so that the tasks provided for them better meet their learning needs

using assessment more frequently to check that all pupils are on course to reach their expected learning goals.
- Ensure that the leadership team and governors undertake more robust monitoring of pupils' and teachers' performance in order to improve the quality of teaching and sustain a rise in attainment.