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9 June 2011

Mrs M Crooks
Headteacher
Burnley Casterton Primary School
Thames Avenue
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Dear Mrs Crooks

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Burnley Casterton Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 June 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 who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to me about the school and to the chair of governors and local authority officer who met with me.

Since the inspection in January 2010 a new assistant headteacher has been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 13 January 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.

Across the school pupils' achievement is steadily improving. Unmoderated results of the 2011 Key Stage 1 national assessments show the school has continued its rising trend in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2B+ in writing has risen from 35% to 56%, with 8% of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. This is particularly impressive as it is the first time any pupils have gained the higher level in writing for several years. Similarly, attainment is rising by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6. Pupils were not entered for the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2010 but the school's assessments show that 74% of this group of pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4 in English and 62% in mathematics. The most recent teacher assessments for the current Year 6 pupils show that results are likely to rise further this year. This represents a much improved picture than at the time of the 2008 inspection. Pupils' progress information, supported by a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations, show that rates of progress are continuing to pick up for the majority of pupils across the school.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Senior leaders have taken decisive and concerted action to improve provision and successfully secured the commitment of staff to raise achievement for all pupils. Staff have welcomed professional training in, for example, developing writing and phonic (sounds and letters) skills, which has contributed to the raised attainment in English. Systems for checking the rate of pupils' progress have been refined so that each teacher has a class tracking form which links into the whole-school system. This enables senior leaders to hold staff to account for the progress pupils make. Likewise, pupils at risk of underachieving or those who need more challenge are identified more readily and suitable intervention programmes are implemented. Consequently, teachers have pertinent information on the national curriculum levels pupils are working at and plan activities which match their abilities and enable them to make faster progress. Pupils say they have more opportunity to work independently and this was observed in several lessons during the monitoring inspection.

Pupils have short-term targets for reading, writing and mathematics. These are presented well in the form of a bookmark. Pupils understand their targets and comment that they 'know what to do to improve'. The school has reviewed its marking policy and has introduced 'pink and green marking' which is appreciated by the pupils. In the best examples marking is linked to the pupils' short-term targets so that there is a continuous cycle of improvement. However, this is not consistent in all classes and senior leaders recognise that there is still a little way to go to ensure the use of short-term targets contributes more securely to the long-term progress of pupils.

The school has moved forward in developing the curriculum more creatively. Pupils commented on increased numbers of visits and visitors, interesting, fun and practical activities which included quizzes and games linked to the themes they study. They understand that links between different subjects deepen their understanding and they can apply information gained from, for example, a visitor to other areas of the curriculum. Teachers have focused on introducing topics with stimulating introductions to motivate interest and enthusiasm. This was observed to particularly good effect in a Year 6 lesson on writing. Through the use of a picture and suitable music the teacher set pupils the task of writing about a visit to the seaside from the viewpoint of one of the characters. On discussing the time frame of the picture pupils used information they had gleaned on a visit to a museum to date the picture. The school recognises that, although they have come some way in integrating creative learning projects into the curriculum, their next task is to review the progression of skills and knowledge pupils will receive as they move from class to class.

The school values the support the local authority provides, for instance, in receiving training from literacy and mathematics consultants.

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
Eileen Mulgrew
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2011



Annex

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

- Raise attainment by ensuring that teachers consistently provide pupils with:
 - Short-term targets related to aspects of their work that pupils need to improve
 - activities that match their abilities and allow them to make good progress
 - sufficient time for pupils to work independently.

- Integrate the creative learning projects into the curriculum in a way that ensures they are an entitlement to all pupils and support the development of the skills of literacy and numeracy.