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10 June 2011

Miss J Colling
Headteacher
Tang Hall Primary School
Sixth Avenue
York
North Yorkshire
YO31 0UT

Dear Miss Colling,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Tang Hall Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 June 2011, for the time you gave to our pre-inspection discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the visit. Please also thank the School's Improvement Partner who met with me prior to the start of the visit and the staff and pupils who were happy to speak with me in meetings or around the school.

Since the last inspection there has been one long-term sickness absence on the teaching staff and two teachers are leaving at the end of the summer term, one to take up a promotion to deputy headship. Despite the initial prospect of redundancy due to budget constraints and the area-wide fall in pupil numbers, the school is now in a position to recruit one new teacher with effect from September 2011. A recent review of key leadership responsibilities is to be revisited following these changes.

As a result of the inspection on 4 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 improvements in teaching and learning, noted at the time of the last inspection, have been sustained and are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment. Although standards remain well below average, the Key Stage 2 test results in 2010 showed a considerable improvement in both English and mathematics compared to the 2009 results. This represented satisfactory and sometimes good progress for those pupils based on their prior attainment. Nevertheless, for the 25% who had special educational needs and/or disabilities, attainment remained well below the national average for similar pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has increased its focus on regular assessments and analyses of the performance of different groups of pupils. Consequently, teachers are held

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to account more rigorously and individual pupils at risk of underachievement are being identified quickly. This is helping leaders and teachers to provide a more-effective range of interventions or individualised programmes of support. The impact of this can be seen in the improving rates of progress for those pupils receiving additional support. For example, the current Year 6 cohort is almost within reach of the government's 'floor standards' for 60% to achieve Level 4 in both English and mathematics in 2011. This would represent good progress for the majority of those pupils when taking their previous attainment into account. The upward trend is set to continue as the current Year 5 pupils are on target to achieve higher results in 2012. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny during this visit supports the school's view that it is likely to sustain these improvements in the future.

The school welcomes and makes good use of the advice, challenge and support provided by the local authority and the School Improvement Partner. Leaders appreciate opportunities to develop further their own skills, for example, in monitoring and evaluation. The accuracy of the headteacher's judgements on teaching and learning were borne out during this inspection. Improvements are evident in the way in which teachers are tailoring their lessons to meet the needs of low-attaining pupils more fully. This works most effectively when tasks provide a good level of challenge as well as clear instructions and guidance. Teachers are increasingly sharing plans with the teaching assistants and providing guidance notes to specify the way in which a particular activity should move pupils' learning on. These aspects demonstrate the impact of staff training and raised expectations regarding the provision of differentiated tasks in lessons to meet all pupils' needs. In some classes, teachers make good use of resources for individual pupils to promote their independence, for instance 'help mats', although this is not consistent. The school is also aware of inconsistencies in the way in which assessment is used to support learning in the classroom, for example, through targeted questioning in lessons and marking in books. A common feature of the school is adults' good knowledge of individual pupils and their social and emotional needs. This is reflected in the high level of care provided for pupils, as staff are committed to removing the barriers to learning that affect a relatively large number of pupils. Consequently, most pupils feel happy and safe, respond well to adults and each other, and are keen to learn.

Although the quality of handwriting and presentation in pupils' books is variable, it is clear that a concerted effort is made to promote writing across the school. There are many displays of pupils' writing in classrooms and corridors. Work scrutiny and external reviews show improvements in pupils' abilities to use a range of vocabulary, connectives, sentence types and story structures. Younger pupils are better able to recall and retell main events in stories and begin to add more detail. Teachers are using more inspiring texts and resources to motivate pupils to write stories. For example, a 'bag of gadgets' engaged Year 5 pupils in using their imagination to write a story in the genre of a teenage spy thriller. Information writing was promoted in a Year 4 lesson by preceding this with pupils' use of computers to research facts about particular animals.

The school is reviewing its curriculum to identify further opportunities for pupils to apply key skills in literacy and numeracy across other subjects. This is a topic of whole-staff discussion currently, to ensure that important subject-specific elements within English and mathematics are still covered sufficiently for pupils' needs.

There are strengths in the school's promotion of cohesion within the local community, of which the school is a key focal point. For example, good partnerships with external agencies and with families make a positive difference to the lives of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The development of a parents' room provides a welcoming and open environment for weekly informal meetings and other opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Attendance at parents' evenings has risen in the last year. Since the last inspection the school has started to develop links with a school in Germany that has a similar geographical profile. Staff are communicating with a school in Nepal with a view to establishing a twinning project there and a further new development is a link with another school in a contrasting area of Yorkshire. It is too early to see the impact of these projects on pupils' awareness of multicultural Britain and the international community.

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

Mrs Marguerite Murphy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 4 February 2010

- Build on and maintain improvements in attainment throughout the school, by:
 - ensuring the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more focused and includes greater challenge, so they make the same good progress as their peers
 - creating more opportunities in other subjects for pupils to practise writing
 - planning tasks and using resources that inspire pupils to write
 - establishing further opportunities for pupils to learn and apply key skills through creative links between subjects.
- Improve community cohesion by linking with schools in other parts of the country and the wider world in order that pupils develop a greater awareness of multicultural Britain and the international community.