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17 June 2011

Mrs Stella Fry
The Headteacher
Merton Abbey Primary School
High Path
Merton
London
SW19 2JY

Dear Mrs Fry

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Merton Abbey Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 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 members of the governing body and to the pupils who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 16 June 2011, 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.

Test results in summer 2010 at the end of Key Stage 2 improved, particularly in English, and these Year 6 pupils made progress that was significantly above the national average. More pupils reached age-related expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 than previous years. The school's current data show that, while there are variations in the attainment between cohorts due to the particular starting points of individual pupils, this pattern of improvement is continuing throughout the school. The school has set challenging targets that it robustly monitors through regular assessments and progress meetings and most pupils are on track to reach these. In the sample of lessons seen, pupils are very engaged and interested in their learning, and are acquiring knowledge and skills well.

Improvement in the standards of writing is a clear whole-school focus and the school has been systematic, rigorous and creative in working on this. Through teachers



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

working together effectively, there has developed a more consistent approach, for example in handwriting, and a greater clarity of expectations as pupils move through the school. The improvement of the learning environment and displays support learning effectively with reminders about sentence structure or vocabulary, and examples of developing work on working walls or of the best efforts for everyone to share in corridors. 'Writer of the Week' and other ways of recognising achievement are effective in motivating pupils. Developments in the curriculum means there are more and improved opportunities to encourage pupils to produce better quality writing. This is evident in effective literacy sessions that use high quality text or exciting video materials to stimulate discussion and thought. It is also apparent in the many interesting opportunities the school now offers to widen pupils' experiences so that their curiosity is stimulated, experience is widened and vocabulary, in particular, is extended. Pupils talk animatedly, for example about their educational visits to Kew Gardens, Hastings or to various museums, and then are proud to show their well-written recounts.

Regular monitoring, with pertinent feedback, followed up by professional development has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching. Teachers' effective management means that pupils participate well. Lessons are interesting and stimulating. Throughout the school, and particularly in the early years, careful attention is given to ensuring that the curriculum takes into account the interests of the pupils. The use of targets to ensure pupils challenge themselves is developing appropriately. Pupils are aware of the levels they wish to achieve or their personal targets. In the best lessons seen, the success criteria of the particular activity was clear to different groups and then made individually challenging to pupils by the addition of a personal target. This meant that the challenge was consistently high for all pupils throughout the session and pupils could effectively self-evaluate their progress. This practice is not yet consistent but senior managers are aware of this and have appropriate plans in place to address the situation.

Leaders have a strong understanding of the current achievement of pupils and strengths and areas of priority for their particular areas. Tailored interventions are put in place quickly for individuals or groups who are identified as being at risk of underachievement, including pupils with special needs. Initiatives to improve aspects of the curriculum are introduced as a result of careful analysis of data and qualitative evidence from observations of colleagues. These are monitored carefully, using outside support where appropriate. Examples include 'Every Child a Talker', which has been introduced to develop early language skills more effectively and a renewed emphasis on using and applying mathematics. Governors have amended the structure of their meetings and received additional training so that they can evaluate the school's data and performance more effectively. They know the school well. Through their own fundraising activities and effective use of budgets and finances, they are also able to support the school in meeting its school development targets by providing appropriate monies for high quality books or improvements to the learning environment.



Led by a dedicated and enthusiastic headteacher who models the school ethos of 'Working hard and caring for each other' in everything she does, the school is building good capacity to improve further. There is a shared and articulated vision of wanting the very best education for every child at Merton Abbey. Morale and enthusiasm are high. Staff are reflective on their practice and want to keep improving. The school uses local authority and other partner support effectively. Parents and carers spoken to are very satisfied with the education their children receive and the reputation of the school is gradually improving in the local 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

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009

- Improve standards in writing by using exciting opportunities across and beyond lessons to stimulate the pupils' interest more effectively.
- Ensure all leaders and managers, including governors, rigorously evaluate the school's performance and act upon their findings to enable them to improve pupils' achievement more swiftly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by setting higher expectations and giving pupils more chance to take the lead in their own learning.