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29 June 2011

Mrs M Gay
Headteacher
Osborne Primary School
Station Road
Erdington
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B23 6UB

Dear Mrs Gay

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

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and pupils gave when I inspected your school on 28 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Your appointment as headteacher in September 2010 has been the most important change in context, and, apart from a new teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there has been no other staffing change since the previous inspection in February 2010.

As a result of that inspection, on 9 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The attainment of Year 6 pupils in the 2010 Key Stage 2 national tests remained low. This represented satisfactory progress from their very low starting points, which was an improvement from below average progress in 2009. In 2011, current teacher assessment data indicates pupils are now making better than expected progress, with broadly average academic attainment overall; mathematics has recovered well to slightly above average. Writing is improving but not as quickly as reading. The progress pupils are making in lessons is good because teaching is now securely good throughout the school. At this visit, most of the lessons I observed were good, with all featuring consistently strong use of assessment to support learning.

The improvements in academic progress are primarily the result of this effective approach to assessment, introduced across the school from September 2010. Teachers' excellent knowledge of their pupils' prior attainment helps in the preparation of work pitched at a suitably challenging and motivational demand, but



pupils can reflect on their assignments and ask to try more difficult, or easier, work if they wish. This approach allows more-able pupils independent and rapid access to challenging work, and all pupils quickly get cracking on their activities in lessons. The honesty of pupils' own choices, coupled to the accuracy of teachers' knowledge of each pupil, is ensuring pupils of all abilities are working at the limit of their capability and pupils feel they have an important voice in their learning. This is very enjoyable for them because they can also see how to make rapid progress, lesson by lesson. Coupled to effective support for pupils at risk of persistent absence, this is leading to attendance substantially improving from below the national average to broadly average now. Marking and feedback to pupils is excellent, giving them clear advice on the strengths of their work and areas for improvement in direct enough terms to make it easy for pupils to correct errors or try a follow-up activity. By and large, teachers are now expecting this to be done in lessons following the return of marked books.

The new headteacher's effective and determined leadership has swiftly established a strong collegiate sense of shared responsibility amongst staff. The positive impact of her single-minded focus on assessment to support learning is an exceptionally good example of the importance of this critical aspect of teaching and learning. Her straightforward, easily understood, consistent approach across the school has lifted expectations of both staff and pupils alike in what they can all achieve together. Partnerships with other local schools are providing good opportunities for staff to share good practice, leading to shared moderation of teacher assessments and, consequently, accurate intervention to support learners who appear to be falling behind. Senior and middle managers jointly observe lessons regularly, checking for consistent application of the school's assessment policy, and this is proving effective. The headteacher rightly expects pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to be making at least two levels of progress across each key stage. Evidence from pupil attainment records show this is now happening.

Monitoring of teaching and learning by the local authority is accurate and supportive of the headteacher's longer-term plans for school growth in line with predicted population changes.

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



Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve pupils' academic progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that, by January 2011, teaching and learning will be judged good or better in at least 75% of lessons, through:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons which stretch and challenge all pupils, especially the higher attainers
 - setting high expectations for each group of pupils, based on what they know, understand and can already do
 - ensuring that pupils know how they will be assessed and have a clear understanding of how to develop their work, so that they know how to reach their targets.
- Raise attendance levels by reducing the numbers of persistent absentees.