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30 June 2011

Ms C Wilson
Headteacher
Fellgate Primary School
Oxford Way
Fellgate Estate
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear
NE32 4XA

Dear Ms Wilson,

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff 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 before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, the Chair of the Governing body and the pupils who gave up time to talk with me.

Since the last inspection two teachers have left the school and two new teachers have joined. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need continues to be high because pupils in the attached resourced provision make up one quarter of the school roll. Cohort sizes vary from seven to 23. Consequently, published performance information requires particularly careful analysis.

As a result of the inspection on 4 November 2009, 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.

Attainment has improved since the last inspection. End of Key Stage 2 outcomes for 2010 and teacher assessment for 2011, together with evidence seen during the monitoring visit, indicate that progress in mathematics has improved and attainment is now broadly average. Attainment in English declined in 2010 mainly as a consequence of the performance of boys in writing. Both teacher assessment and evidence seen during the monitoring visit indicate that current Year 6 pupils are expected to do better in 2011. In both subjects, most pupils are now making at least the progress expected of them given their starting points and some are making better than expected progress. In Key Stage 1 the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics in 2010 improved and was broadly in line with the national average. However, attainment at the higher levels in mathematics

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

remained low. Unvalidated results indicate that almost all pupils in 2011 reached expected levels with a few reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics.

These improvements in performance are linked to an increasingly rigorous analysis of information and tracking of pupil performance by senior leaders and staff. Robust monitoring ensures that teachers are held accountable for pupils' rates of progress. It also identifies those pupils who need extra help so that support can be provided. Teachers make effective use of assessment information in the classroom. They amend their lesson plans daily in the light of ongoing assessment and, as a result, activities are increasingly well targeted to meet the learning needs of individuals and groups of pupils, including the more able. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils who are aware of their current performance and, particularly in mathematics, know what they have to do next in order to improve. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed to support individuals and groups and well informed about their needs.

In lessons there is an emphasis on pupils talking about what they are learning and, increasingly, on how. There is also a clear expectation that pupils will use their literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology skills to solve problems across the curriculum. Pupils respond well to this approach. They show enthusiasm, enjoyment and perseverance. In science pupils are involved regularly in enjoyable investigative activities with an appropriate emphasis on planning, predicting and recording. Good use is made of visits and visitors to stimulate pupils' curiosity and provide real-life contexts for learning.

Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is good. Pupils are challenged to analyse, explain and justify their methods but lesson plans could identify more opportunities for them to do so. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were challenged to reach a target number in six steps. They worked cooperatively in small groups and were able to explain how they did it to each other and to the teacher. Pupils in Key Stage 1 played a game in which they were asked to predict whether the next card turned over would have a higher or lower number on it. Teachers provide clear explanations that pupils understand and which build upon and refer to their existing knowledge. They help them to tackle challenges without simply telling them how. This was clearly seen in a lesson about the use of Venn and Carroll diagrams. Teachers use interactive white boards well to enhance their explanations, to allow pupils to share their success and in particular to support pupils in articulating how they have tackled problems and what they have learnt.

The school has improved its capacity for making sustainable improvements at all levels of leadership. The previous inspection report noted that the school was improving securely and quickly because the headteacher had established a strong focus on getting the best out of every pupil. The improvement has continued. Governors recognise that they now monitor the performance of the school more rigorously. The Chair of the Governing Body is part of the senior leadership team and attends meetings regularly. Governors and staff members are organised into faculties which take responsibility for planning and overseeing developments in different aspects of school life. Action planning is effective in bringing about improvements. Professional development for staff has focused effectively on the

needs of individuals as identified through performance management as well as the needs of the school as identified in the improvement plan. Senior leaders have also allocated resources to allow teachers to share good practice by planning lessons together and observing each other teach. As a result, teachers report that they are more aware of the characteristics of a good lesson, including the need for the active involvement of pupils.

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

Susan Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 4 November 2009

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics and science, especially for the more able pupils by:
 - making certain that all activities allow pupils to apply their skills to solve problems
 - ensuring that all activities are purposeful, challenging and provide opportunities for pupils to analyse, explain and justify their methods.
- Achieve greater consistency in teaching in order to improve the rate of progress in all years by:
 - making more effective use of lesson planning to make certain activities stretch all pupils
 - regularly sharing the good and inspiring practice that exists in school
 - sharpening the use of assessment information to inform lesson planning and the next steps in the pupils' learning consistently.