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30 June 2011

Miss V Birchall
Headteacher
Newton Westpark Primary School
Tennyson Avenue
Leigh
Lancashire
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Dear Miss Birchall,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Newton Westpark Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Discussions with senior leaders and managers, the Chair of the Governing Body, the pupils and the Local Leader of Education from the former partner school were also very helpful. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave to talk to me and for the welcome I received.

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school since the March 2010 inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 24 March 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 to improve.

The results for Key Stage 2 national tests improved in 2010. They are broadly in line with the national average with pupils making significantly better progress than expected. Attainment in mathematics is above the national average. Attainment in English also improved. Although it remained below the national figure, more pupils reached age-related expectations for reading and writing than in previous years. In contrast, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010 declined. This is because almost all pupils in this year group entered Year 1 with low levels of attainment. Although they made good progress from their starting points, it was not enough to reach national expectations. Improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage mean children now make better progress consistently in all areas of learning. Consequently, children now leave Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The school's tracking information suggests current attainment across the school is variable. It is below average overall but is improving in most groups. Pupils' achievement in reading is stronger than in mathematics and writing. Standards are rising because pupils no longer make uneven progress across subjects or year groups. Pupils' progress in writing has improved. Almost all pupils are making expected progress with an increasing number making accelerated progress over time. Nonetheless, historical weaknesses mean too many pupils still have gaps in their learning. Leaders are aware that in order to tackle this underachievement and raise attainment levels, more pupils, particularly those in Year 1 and Year 5, need to make better than expected progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates because of the additional support they receive in lessons and small group teaching sessions.

Teaching across the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, has improved since the previous inspection. Consistent planning and better use of assessment information mean teachers plan lively lessons which capture the interests and needs of almost all pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising because of improved subject knowledge and a shared understanding and application of teaching strategies. Teachers are making greater use of role play and other speaking and listening activities to enable pupils to engage actively in their learning. Pupils speak positively about the improvements. They say learning is more fun and that they are expected to work hard.

A whole-school focus on writing has led to a systematic approach to teaching writing skills. This begins in the Reception Year and is faithfully built on in each year group. Consequently, all pupils are able to write for sustained periods and for a variety of purposes. Developments to the curriculum mean pupils have greater opportunity to use their writing skills across different subjects. However, the quality of pupils' writing in these subjects is not always as strong as it is in their writing books. Reading is improving because there is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' letters and sounds knowledge and using novels to fire pupils' enthusiasm for writing.

Teachers' marking has improved because whole-school systems have been implemented and are consistently applied. Teachers' feedback on pupils' writing is very thorough and provides strong guidance to pupils on how to improve their work further. However, this good practice is not consistently applied to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils know and use their targets for English and mathematics. Clear displays of pupils' writing linked to attainment levels ensure pupils are aware of what they need to do to achieve their goals.

Improvements to the school's systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress mean senior leaders and managers have a much better understanding of how each pupil is achieving. The implementation of regular meetings between teachers and senior leaders and managers to discuss each pupil's performance has led to greater whole-school accountability for the academic progress of all pupils.

Determined leadership, plus a willingness to acknowledge weaknesses and accept support, have enabled the school to make good progress since the previous inspection. Staff morale

is high and there is a common sense of purpose. As a result, complacency is being eradicated and a culture of 'no excuses' is being adopted. The focus on pupils' well-being remains as strong as in the previous inspection. However, this is now being matched with a stronger emphasis on pupils' academic achievement. Regular monitoring of teaching coupled with effective whole-school and individual support from subject leaders means the quality of teaching is improving. This in turn is leading to pupils making consistent progress across the school. These improvements coupled with stronger whole-school systems for teaching and monitoring pupils' progress mean the school has made good progress in demonstrating a better capacity to improve.

The external support provided to the school has been effective and well targeted. The support from local authority consultants has led to a consistent approach to writing. The school has also benefitted from the Greater Manchester Challenge partnership arrangement. The Local Leader in Education has provided strong support to help teachers improve their practice and to aid leaders and managers to implement whole-school systems.

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,

Miss Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 24 March 2010

- Improve pupils' attainment in English, especially writing, by providing more opportunities for its use across the majority of subjects and by increasing teachers' subject knowledge.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, especially in English, so that pupils' standards improve and they make at least satisfactory progress by 2011.
- Improve the implementation of school tracking systems by September 2010 to ensure that all staff can more precisely base their lesson planning on detailed knowledge of pupils' learning and pupils know how to improve their work.