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7 July 2011

Mrs K Jessop
Headteacher
Roughwood Primary School
Roughwood Road
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S61 3HL

Dear Mrs Jessop,

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 6 July 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I am also grateful to the governing body and the local authority for assistance with this visit.

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.

The school has responded positively to the issues identified at the previous inspection. The headteacher, supported well by senior colleagues, has shown great resolve in leading the school through a period of much change and disruption to staffing alongside much needed improvements to the school environment. As a result, the pace of change has accelerated, significant steps to prioritise actions have been taken and there is a strong momentum for improving the school. All staff are stepping up to the mark. No time has been lost and excuses for the school's past deficiencies have not been tolerated. Decisive action has been taken to redeploy staff and new appointments have been made. This means that the legacy of underachievement and low expectations are being tackled more effectively and there is a greater acceptance of the collective responsibility for driving the work to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress.

Pupils are more positive about their school and say that many things have improved of late. They strongly agree that teaching is much better with increased opportunities for them to use and apply their knowledge in practical activities and where they can discuss and share their ideas with others. They feel they are making better progress in their work and talk with enthusiasm about activities where they have investigated and solved problems, such as finding out the extent to which celery absorbs red food colouring and using their

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mathematical skills to solve real life problems. 'Work is more exciting and harder now', 'Behaviour is much better' and 'Attitudes to learning are improving', were typical comments.

Pupils' current work, the test results for 2011, together with the school's own assessment information show there are signs of better progress on the part of some pupils and attainment is beginning to rise. Increasing numbers of pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in mathematics has risen to 75%. In addition, a notable success is that over the last two terms approximately 70% of pupils across the school have made better than expected progress in mathematics. This reflects the improving impact of the school's intervention work. This is also because the school has successfully introduced a range of strategies, particularly in mathematics and science, to raise pupils' achievement, which in turn are leading to improvements in classroom practice. Tracking and target setting systems are more effective in identifying pupils who are underachieving and those who require greater challenge. There are clearer expectations of the progress pupils should make with regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving. Staff are held to account for the progress that pupils make. Although not consistent in all classes, teachers are gaining confidence in judging what pupils can do and what they need to learn next. Nevertheless, senior leaders are aware that, occasionally, tasks for more-able pupils are not demanding enough and are restricted to composing a longer piece of writing or tackling a harder sum with insufficient attention given to the higher-order thinking skills that pupils need.

Another factor contributing to pupils making better progress is linked to the school's work on improving the quality of teaching and learning and establishing greater consistency. There has been considerable emphasis on the professional development of staff. This is central to accelerating pupils' progress further. Since the last inspection whole-school policies have been introduced in teaching, marking and calculation. Improvements have also been forthcoming in teachers' planning and in systems for recording pupils' work in mathematics and science. Where teaching is strong, teachers have the confidence to stand back and let pupils make the learning their own. Teachers question pupils effectively and teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support. Where teaching is less effective teachers over-direct, which limits pupils' development of independent skills and insufficient time is given for pupils to share their ideas with others and to direct their own learning.

Attendance, while in line with similar schools, is improving. Senior staff continue to seek ways of promoting better attendance through a range of rewards and incentives and through the coordinated work of the admin team, the learning mentor and the education welfare officer. This has resulted in better contact being established with parents who are made fully aware of the consequences of persistent pupil absence. In addition, pupils are encouraged to attend more regularly because of the recent improvements to the school environment and in the quality of their learning. 'We want to come to school more now' and 'Not so many people are arriving late now', were typical comments.

Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is developing with improvements to the curriculum and in a greater emphasis on encouraging pupils to reflect on other cultures and different

religions. Links with a school in Zambia have been established and the school promotes respect for human rights by working towards becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. This ensures that pupils are increasingly aware of valuing differences and of challenging prejudice and discrimination.

Considering the good advances made since its last inspection and along with its other strengths, including accurate self-evaluation and the headteacher's excellent leadership, the school has strengthened its capacity to sustain improvement.

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

Steve Isherwood

Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Raise standards in mathematics and science by:
 - matching work more finely to pupils' needs
 - implementing a policy for calculation
 - improving the presentation of recording in mathematics and the frequency of recording in science
 - providing plentiful practical activities for pupils to apply their knowledge in both subjects.

- Improve the rate of attendance by:
 - promoting a wider range of strategies that families and pupils understand and respond to well

- Ensure that pupils gain a clear insight into cultural diversity by:
 - raising the profile of diversity throughout the curriculum