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14 July 2011

Mrs P Walker
Headteacher
St George's CofE Primary School
Church Street
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Cheshire
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Dear Mrs Walker,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St George's C of E Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 July 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 pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk with me and to the governor representative and staff for their time and courtesy.

Since the last inspection, three new governors have joined the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 25 January 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Results of the 2010 Key Stage 2 national assessments show an improvement from the previous year and are significantly better than expected nationally. All groups attained well, and evidence suggests that the school is closing the gap for those pupils who have underperformed in the past. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieved well across the school. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 improved for the more-able pupils, with more achieving the higher level of attainment than the previous year. The progress pupils make has also improved and is now significantly better than expected nationally. This is most noticeable in English, although standards in mathematics have also improved. Data held by the school showing current attainment indicate better progress resulting in more pupils on track to reach age-related expectations.

Leaders of the school judge teaching and learning positively and improving the quality of provision has been a focus for the school. In the most effective lessons, activities are matched to meet pupils' needs and pupils work collaboratively. Learning is given a strong purpose; for example, pupils have planned activities for the audience of the school

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production, which involve calculating profit and loss. This is not the case in all lessons and there are instances when the pace of learning slows and pupils do not progress as well as they are capable of doing.

Staff set more challenging targets and expectations of what pupils can achieve have generally improved. Work in the Early Years Foundation Stage has developed to involve parents and carers to a greater extent. Consequently, parents and carers have become more involved in the school and more aware of its expectations. Training for staff has been provided and, as a result, staff are more aware of the need to close the gap in the levels of attainment for all groups. Moreover, they have a better understanding of levels of attainment for all pupils. The school has adopted pupil progress meetings between senior leaders, class teachers and teaching assistants. These meetings not only look at the progress made by all pupils, but also examine how planning is meeting the specific needs of the learners. Planning is more consistently applied to lessons. Assessment and monitoring systems, policies and procedures have been agreed and implemented. This has resulted in a greater accountability for all staff. Emphasis has been given to the improvement of mathematics across the school, in particular on problem-solving and calculation. The school has focused on developing pupils' basic skills in mathematics and provides incentives when pupils complete the 'maths passport.'

Leaders follow a cycle of monitoring and evaluation in order to assess the quality of provision. The school has focused on developing assessment for learning strategies and their implementation is monitored. This provides teachers with areas of strength and weakness. As a result, good practice is shared across school, for example, using success criteria to record assessments which lead to better tailoring of tasks according to pupil need. While this good practice is evident, it is not used consistently across all classes. Monitoring by leaders shows a determination to raise achievement and they are aware of what needs to be done to secure better outcomes. However, they acknowledge more evidence is required to show how monitoring and evaluation are leading to improvements. While lesson observations are carried out, criteria used to assess the quality of provision are not consistent and sometimes lack rigour.

Committed governors are now more effectively challenging the school, as well as providing support to staff and pupils. They know the strengths and weaknesses and are now probing leaders as to how they will secure further improvements. They are better skilled due to a range of training and are aware of pupils' progress and attainment levels. They monitor the effectiveness of the development plan and now regularly discuss teaching and learning strategies and data collection. Governors are linked to classes and many visit the school and lessons regularly. Although they monitor the effectiveness of the school's work, they lack rigour with which they evaluate the school's actions.

The local authority has supported the school through the work of the School Improvement Partner and is facilitating ways for the school to work with other local schools.

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

Mrs Jane Millward

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 25 January 2010

- Accelerate progress by:
 - matching work more closely to pupils' level of ability, especially for the more-able pupils
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in mathematics and for the more-able pupils.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring recently-introduced planning and assessment strategies are used consistently in planning
 - ensuring governors are involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work.