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15 July 2011

Dr J Turnock
Headteacher
Shifnal Primary School
Curriers Lane
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Dear Dr Turnock

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 14 July 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, pupils, parents and representatives from the governing body for the time they gave to meet with me.

Since the last inspection, staffing has remained stable, a teacher will leave this August and a new teacher will start in September 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 16 June 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.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has significantly improved this year. For example, the unvalidated data for the 2011 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicates that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above for both English and mathematics has risen from 72% in 2010 to 94%. For the first time, pupils have achieved 100% Level 4 and above for both writing and mathematics and 94% Level 4 and above in reading. In addition, 55% of pupils achieved Level 5 in writing. The improvements have come about because of the hard work of all staff through the one-to-one support for targeted pupils and the careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress at six-weekly intervals. This ensures that any issues are swiftly identified and interventions put in place to support improvement. The learning mentor works effectively with pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

September 2010



and this helps pupils to learn effectively. Staff also accurately identify gaps in pupils' learning.

The school has introduced a range of strategies to support pupils in improving their writing and reading, including implementing a whole-school policy for reading, spelling and handwriting. The school has also successfully introduced structured learning projects such as 'Every Child a Writer' and 'Talk for Writing'. Weaknesses in boys' performance relative to girls have been identified and addressed. New books, which broaden the range of texts available for pupils and include fiction, non-fiction and texts of interest to boys, have been purchased for every classroom. A reading club for boys has been started. New writing tasks have been introduced and more opportunities have been created for extended writing in Key Stage 2. There is greater challenge for higher attaining pupils and gifted and talented pupils. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils have attended the nearby high school regularly to work in Year 7 mathematics lessons.

The majority of the teaching observed during the monitoring visit was good. Pupils' progress in lessons was good because of the carefully matched support from teaching assistants and the improvements in teachers' planning. Teachers' planning takes greater account of pupil data and pupils' different starting points. In the best lessons, pupils could decide their own level of challenge. Teachers are becoming more confident in planning the complexity of the tasks to extend the thinking of higher attaining pupils. Pupils confidently assess their own learning. Pupils say that they enjoy learning and find lessons interesting and all staff give them plenty of support to help them learn effectively. There is greater consistency in teachers' marking and opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their targets for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning has benefited from teachers planning jointly and supporting each other in lessons, particularly when new ideas and techniques are being developed.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have worked determinedly to improve teaching and learning. Staff have worked intensively to develop their understanding of how to improve teaching and learning through good quality support from the local authority and evaluating the good practice of other schools. The school now has a culture of sharing good practice which is based on secure monitoring systems. These systems are understood and used effectively by all senior leaders. School improvement planning has improved, but the school's current development plan does not have measurable milestones. While these are in supporting documents, it is difficult to get a quick overview of how successful the school has been in addressing weaknesses. The quality of the local authority's information and support for the governing body has helped to improve the confidence and rigour with which it holds the school to account. These developments have improved the school's capacity to improve.

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

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - increasing the proportion of lessons that are good or better
 - involving pupils in assessing their own learning
 - ensuring that all work is closely tailored to meet the needs of all ages and abilities, particularly in mixed class settings
 - providing greater challenge for more-able pupils.

- Identify very clear priorities for school improvement by:
 - improving the effectiveness of school improvement planning, so that it includes measurable milestones, clear objectives and is linked to raising attainment and accelerating progress
 - increasing the effectiveness of tracking and monitoring systems, so that all senior leaders have a clear view of the quality of teaching, levels of attainment and achievement across the school.