

Thursday 29 September 2011

Mr R J Widdowson  
Headteacher  
Garston Church of England Primary School  
Holman Road  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L19 5NS

Dear Mr Widdowson,

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Garston Church of England Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 28 September 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I am grateful to the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives from the local authority for sparing the time to meet with me. It was a pleasure to speak to pupils, so please pass on my thanks to them also.

Since the last inspection, three new teaching assistants have been appointed and two new governors are in post.

As a result of the inspection on Wednesday 30 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Results of the national assessments and tests in 2010 show that attainment was significantly lower than that expected nationally at the end of Year 6, although pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attained well in English. Attainment at the end of Year 2 further showed attainment significantly lower than expected. However, in 2011 unvalidated data shows a more positive picture, with attainment levels improving in all areas by the time pupils leave the school. All pupils achieved the level expected for their age in English and gains are also evident in mathematics. Improvements in levels of attainment can also be seen at the end of Year 2, where attainment in all areas has risen at age-related expectations. Attainment at the higher level in English remains stubbornly low with no pupils reaching the higher level in writing. Pupil progress, according to internal data, is improving with more pupils now making at least expected progress.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The school has engaged with the local authority to develop teachers' skills and understanding of assessing pupils' work. There is now a greater confidence in assessing what pupils can and cannot do and this is beginning to better inform pupils' next steps in their learning. Marking of pupils' work is a variable picture. Some marking of writing guides pupils well to their next stages in learning, and pupils report that they are given time to act upon teachers' advice. However, this is not yet consistently applied across all classes and subjects. Opportunities for writing have developed in other subjects, yet marking of this work is less developmental and simply affirms the efforts of pupils. Targets are in place for some pupils, but this is inconsistently applied. Pupils demonstrate some awareness of targets, but this is not embedded across the school. Plans are in place to develop the pupils' voice in the setting of their own targets. Tracking procedures are more embedded and teachers are more confident in using this information to identify potential gaps in pupils learning. The headteacher monitors attainment and progress of all pupils through pupil progress meetings which are held with all teachers. Attainment is monitored according to age-related expectations, and the school can now evidence more pupils on track to reach the level expected for their age. In some cases accelerated progress is made. This is most noticeable in the current Year 6 cohort.

Teachers are now using information and assessment from lessons and learning to inform their planning. However, there remain ways in which this could be more consistently used across the school. Challenging targets are set for all pupils and these are regularly monitored by the headteacher. A greater awareness is evident from the headteacher of the need for attainment to improve further and he is keen to build upon the successes in the 2011 results. There is an acknowledgment that more needs to be done, especially to improve attainment and progress for the more able and attainment in Key Stage 1.

As progress made by pupils has increased, it is clear to see that expectations by teachers of what pupils can and cannot do has also increased. Teachers are raising their expectations of what can be achieved during lessons and pupils report that they are moved on in their learning. They are positive about learning experiences and state that, 'teachers help you with your work when you're stuck' and that 'you learn lots of sums'.

The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning predominately through lesson observations and learning walks. He provides teachers with strengths and areas to develop. A detailed cycle of self-evaluation is now embedded, which details aspects of monitoring and evaluation. While procedures are securely in place, there are ways in which they could be further developed to increase the accountability of teachers. Governors are supportive of the school and generally are aware of the strengths and weaknesses. They are becoming more challenging in their approach but could be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's actions to a greater degree to further hold the school to account.

A raft of support has been delivered by the local authority which has been tailored to the needs of the school. Training has focused on the raising of achievement, predominately in English and mathematics, and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Generally, this

support has been well received. The school is involved in a cluster arrangement of working collaboratively with a group of local schools, in a learning network.

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 Wednesday 30 June 2010**

Raise standards in mathematics and English, particularly in writing, and increase the pace of pupils' learning by:

- making more use of the school's wide range of tracking data to identify gaps in learning or the slower progress being made by some pupils and taking swift action to address this
- ensuring that teachers use this information more effectively in day-to-day planning, marking and setting targets for pupil
- raising teachers expectations of what pupils can be expected to do in lessons and over time
- developing the leadership team's current monitoring of teaching to focus more sharply on the quality of learning and progress made by groups and individual pupils in classes
- developing further teachers' skills in accurately assessing pupils' work, providing higher levels of challenge and more specific pointers for improvement, particularly in pupils' writing.