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30 September 2011

Ms N Purvis
Headteacher
Bede Burn Primary School
Dene Terrace
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear
NE32 5NJ

Dear Ms Purvis,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bede Burn Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 September 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also thank the teachers and pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

Since the last inspection two teachers have left the school. A new deputy headteacher took up post in September 2010 and two new teachers started in September 2011. On the day of the inspection the headteacher was absent due to illness.

As a result of the inspection on the 10 and 11 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.

Senior leaders have made a determined effort to focus their work on raising pupils' achievement across the school. Initially, after the inspection progress was slow but it is now accelerating as the initiatives put in place begin to have more impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Senior leaders have developed and revised systems for checking how well pupils are achieving and the new deputy headteacher is driving the improvements in teachers' ability to assess pupils' work and plan the next steps in learning for pupils with different abilities. This has resulted in pupils receiving extra support where necessary for short periods of time to catch up with their peers. This support has been effective in raising pupils' attainment for the last two years in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Higher-attaining pupils also have work which is more challenging and the school's data show that, especially in reading and mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is increasing across the school. Pupils' writing remains a weaker element and the daily programme put in place this term to help pupils to match letters and sounds to improve their reading and writing is in its infancy. Currently, this is not as focused as it could be

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because sometimes the pace is too slow and there is no clear understanding of how this should be taught across the school. This was evident in the different methods observed on the day of the inspection.

In lessons observed pupils were attentive and keen to take part. There were many opportunities for pupils to talk together to discuss their work and give feedback to the teacher. There was good use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' writing and give them a context for their work. Teachers' planning has improved and teaching assistants are better deployed to help and support those in most need, often carrying out different activities which move learning forward. The planning is well-annotated to show where pupils have understood the day's learning and how this is revised or extended for the following day's lesson. Consequently, activities are matched to ability better and pupils' progress is accelerating. The new marking scheme and the whole-school expectations of presentation are evident in books. Marking has improved significantly in some classes with teachers giving clear indications of how to improve work and opportunities for pupils to revise and edit their work. However, this is not consistent across the school and the very good practice seen in some books in Key Stage 2 is not shared sufficiently across the school. In mathematics and science books there is evidence of improved opportunities for pupils to solve problems and reason and carry out their own investigations. In the books seen most pupils were working at age-related expectations.

In the Reception class children settled into learning quickly from the beginning of the day and were keen to access the good range of activities on offer to them in the two indoor spaces. Many children were accessing the reading and writing opportunities on offer and could talk about what they had learnt in school so far. The activities on offer enabled children to initiate their own learning and adults were observed developing children's vocabulary and speaking and listening skills well. There is a clear theme across all six areas of learning and a good match between activities. The outdoor area has undergone substantial extension and refurbishment with a good range of fixed equipment to develop children's skills, such as a built-in sand pit and an exciting 'den' and patio area. On the day of the inspection, however, children were not able to access all six areas of learning here and the activities seen were too teacher-directed. There were no opportunities for pupils to initiate their own learning, for example, in reading, writing or creative development. The teacher in charge has plans to develop this area further throughout the term but these plans have yet to be fully implemented.

The headteacher has revised the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders to strengthen the school's capacity to improve. There are now three experienced phase leaders who have responsibility for pupils' progress and achievement across their phase. This is effective in raising the profile of pupils' achievement and in involving them more fully in monitoring and evaluating the school's planned actions. Phase leaders hold regular pupil progress meetings with staff and use data well to discuss individual pupils' progress. The staff have received training to enable them to assess pupils' attainment accurately and the staff work together well as a team to scrutinise the work in pupils' books and monitor the effectiveness of the initiatives put in place. There are clear lines of responsibility with phase leaders acting as

mentors to new staff and increased involvement in developing teaching and learning through planned release time to observe lessons and give feedback to teachers. There is on-going support from the local authority and the school uses consultants well to help senior leaders move forward the areas for 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

Joy Frost
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on Thursday 10 June 2010

- Raise pupils' achievement and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress further especially in science by:
 - ensuring the tasks and activities inspire pupils and challenge their thinking so that they attain higher levels
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems and justify their solutions.

- Ensure that the quality of all teaching and learning reflects the best practice by:
 - making certain there is a strong focus on raising achievement
 - making explicit what all pupils need to do to improve their work.

- By January 2011, improve the quality of outdoor learning for Reception children, extending the range of child-initiated opportunities so that children can find out more things for themselves.