

13 October 2011

Headteacher
Rossington St Michael's CofE Primary School
Sheepbridge Lane
Old Rossington
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN11 0EZ

Dear Mr Schooling

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Rossington St Michael's CofE Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 October 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please convey my thanks also to the members of staff, the pupils, and the Chair of the Governing Body who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 14 July 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.

The early, unvalidated data on pupils' test and assessment results in 2011 show that attainment at Key Stage 1 has improved since 2010, particularly in reading, and was above average. The results at Key Stage 2 were very similar to the results in 2010, but this means that the school may not have kept pace with improvement nationally, making the school's results below average in 2011. The pupils' good behaviour and good relationships with the teachers ensured that the pupils made at least satisfactory progress in the lessons seen during the inspection.

The school has made rapid progress during the current school term in implementing major improvements in the use of assessment. The pupils have responded very well to the well-designed procedures, which have given them a much clearer understanding of their current levels of attainment and the things they need to do to get to higher levels. In discussion with the inspector, the pupils spoke confidently about the progress they were making and the levels they were aiming for and precisely about the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to develop. It was clear that the discussions they are having with the staff and the quality of the information they are receiving are improving the pupils' motivation. As a result, they described how they were working more effectively in lessons and said that the new ways of working were helping to improve behaviour in lessons generally. The

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

procedures ensure that both the pupils and the staff have a very clear understanding of particular knowledge and skills, which the pupils are finding difficult. As a result, the curriculum has been adapted to give support to individual pupils, where necessary. The marking of the pupils' work is undertaken reasonably frequently and contains written comments on key pieces of work that are usually instructive for the pupils. The quality of the comments was generally better for literacy work than for mathematics.

Routinely, the teachers' planning focuses on clear learning objectives and, in lessons, the teachers explain carefully what they expect the pupils to learn so that they understand what they have to do. In the lessons observed and in the pupils' workbooks, the tasks set by the teachers were appropriate. The pupils enjoy the work, engage in the tasks well and concentrate for good periods of time, often working independently. A few examples of the teachers' planning showed that the teachers were checking the progress of individual pupils and making changes to the plans accordingly. Generally, however, there was not sufficient evidence that the teachers were using assessment information about the pupils to provide different tasks to meet particular needs. At the same time, whilst the teachers asked relevant questions of the pupils which helped to promote learning, they did so randomly and usually relied on volunteers for answers, though many pupils were keen to volunteer. The teachers did not take the opportunity to use the questions to ascertain how well the pupils were learning and adapt the lessons accordingly. As a result, whilst the progress made by the pupils was steady and secure, it was not rapid.

The pupils spoke enthusiastically about a project developing links with a community in Africa. They demonstrated good knowledge of the way of life in the African community and were very keen to talk about how different it is from their own. The impact of the work on the pupils' thinking is evident also in a much-improved response from the pupils to the school's annual harvest festival appeal, which included raising funds to support the African school; the pupils were, understandably, very proud of their efforts.

The school development plan is focussed well on the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The activities planned are appropriate and being implemented carefully. The pupils say that the school is improving: as one put it, 'This year, I think the school has gone up hill.' The development plan lacks precision, however, in setting out unequivocally the level to which the school needs to raise pupils' attainment and so does not provide for the managers, the staff and the governing body a sufficient sense of the pace of progress required. The governing body is supportive of change at the school and willing to engage with it, but does not ask well-informed questions sufficiently to be able to hold the managers closely to account for making progress. For most of the period since the last inspection, the school's development of new assessment procedures was cautious, hampered for a time by staffing difficulties, but also measured and considered. As a result, the leaders and managers have ensured a good level of understanding of the procedures and commitment to them amongst the staff. That has meant in turn that the subsequent implementation of the new procedures has been rapid and secure. The senior leaders have delegated important areas of responsibility since the last inspection, in order to improve capacity to make improvements. In particular, managers have undertaken greater

responsibility for monitoring the work of the school and do so conscientiously and more systematically than previously. Their work has provided good information, which has been used to inform the staff about specific areas of practice to be improved. The school has developed links with other schools, which are helping the managers to gain a better understanding of how to evaluate the quality of the provision at Rossington St Michael's, but their judgements are not yet sufficiently incisive and so, whilst their activities are bringing about improvements, the pace of change has been steady, rather than rapid.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in 14 July 2010

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to ensure a better match of activities in lessons to pupils' different learning needs
 - improving teachers' marking so that it more effectively informs pupils about their attainment, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve
 - providing pupils with more opportunities for learning without adult support.
- Broaden pupils' understanding of and contact with the richness of the wider world.
- Ensure that senior leaders and managers monitor the ongoing progress of groups of pupils more effectively to better inform short-term planning for improvement.