

# PROTECT-INSPECTION

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10 November 2011

Mrs L Mann  
Headteacher  
Ackworth Mill Dam Junior and Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Mann

## **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Ackworth Mill Dam Junior and Infant School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 November 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, your School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Governing Body.

As a result of the inspection on 29 April 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection the school has undertaken a number of initiatives designed to raise levels of attainment. The focus on writing is proving successful, with results from the 2011 Key Stage 1 assessments close to the national average. Equally, a systematic approach to the teaching of reading is showing early signs of bringing about improvements across the school. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 show improvements on recent years, particularly in English. However, relatively few of the more-able pupils reached the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics. Although pockets remain where progress is less marked, the proportion of pupils working at the expected levels for their age is clearly on the increase. This is a more positive picture than at the time of the last inspection. It is improving because there are more good elements to teaching than was the case in April 2010. Appropriately trained and dedicated teaching assistants provide high quality support in lessons, enabling pupils with additional needs to make good progress. However, where teaching remains at a satisfactory level, pupils' progress is less marked. Teachers more consistently use assessment data to plan work at an appropriate level of challenge for pupils. While most pupils have some understanding of their targets and how to improve their work, not all understand the curriculum levels at which they are working.

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Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They remain eager to learn throughout their lessons. Pupils relish the opportunities to implement their basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in the more creative 'afternoon curriculum.' During these sessions there is a plethora of opportunities to explore learning through art, design, history and geography as well as through film-making. There is a tangible air of excitement during the sessions where teachers willingly work with classes other than their own in order to maximise the impact of their own interests and areas of expertise. Senior leaders are at an early stage of monitoring the 'afternoon curriculum' to gauge its success in raising levels of attainment.

The school's leadership team has an accurate understanding of where they need to focus their efforts to improve the school further. School development planning is correctly focused on weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The school recognises the need to fine-tune the plan by revising time scales for implementation and linking actions to measurable outcomes for pupils. A regular programme of lesson observations provides senior leaders with an accurate view of strengths and weakness in teaching. Outcomes from this monitoring are to feed directly in to the school's performance management system. Since the last inspection the school has put in place a rigorous assessment tracking system. Using this system the progress made by individuals is monitored on a half-termly basis. This information is used effectively to identify those pupils requiring additional support in order that they make better rates of progress and that no one is in danger of being left behind.

Parents and carers spoken to during the monitoring visit, as well as information scrutinised, indicate significant improvements in levels of communication between home and school. A new school website and regular newsletters provide up-to-date information and guidance for parents and carers. Of particular note are the weekly family learning sessions. Parents and carers are guided on current practice in the school's methods of teaching literacy, numeracy and ICT. They are joined by their children during the session to reinforce practice learned and provided with follow-up work to do together at home. Parents and carers feel welcomed in to the school and are assured that their views are considered by school leaders.

This monitoring inspection included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

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

James Kilner

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010**

Improve the rate of progress pupils make across the school and raise the standards they attain by:

- improving their acquisition of basic skills, especially in writing and mathematics, and their capacity to apply them in other subjects
- ensuring that work is well-matched to the full range of pupils' needs and provides the right level of challenge for all, including more-able pupils
- ensuring that tasks are clearly explained, are interesting and actively involve pupils.

Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:

- ensuring that all leaders have the knowledge and understanding of how to judge the quality of practice by its impact on pupils' outcomes
- establishing a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation that involves all leaders
- ensuring that the information gained from monitoring is used to escalate the rate of improvement.

Strengthen relationships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring more regular, formal communications with parents and carers
- establishing more ways to ascertain parents' and carers' views of, and involvement in, the school
- providing parents and carers with clear and regular information about their children's progress and how they can support them at home.