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18 November 2011

Ms J Bird
Headteacher
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Fairclough Street
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Dear Ms Bird

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Harry Gosling Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Discussions with staff, the vice-chair of the governing body, the pupils and the representative from the local authority were very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave to talk to me and for the welcome I received.

Since the June 2010 inspection five class teachers including the Early Years Foundation Stage leader have left the school and been replaced. Three temporary appointments have been made to replace teachers on maternity leave including one of the assistant headteachers. A part-time music teacher has been appointed. Roles within the leadership team have been redefined. Four new governors have joined the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 23 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.

Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 remains broadly average. In other year groups, attainment is variable and much depends on the quality of teaching in previous years. Attainment is higher in reading than in writing and mathematics. Progress remains uneven across the school but there are signs of improvement. This is closely linked to the quality of teaching which is improving. Last year, better progress was made in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In order to secure consistently good progress for pupils in all year groups, more teaching needs to be good or better. Senior and middle leaders work effectively with colleagues to improve the quality of teaching, including by contributing to planning sessions. The school currently lacks enough models of very good teaching. Links with other schools are being investigated to provide further professional development opportunities for teachers.

Accurate and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by a range of leaders at the school shows that teaching is improving. Teachers receive useful feedback on how to improve teaching and learning and these development points are carried forward into subsequent observations. The building blocks for good teaching are in place. Teachers have a clearer view of what constitutes good learning for pupils. They are routinely using more accurate assessments to plan for the needs of their particular pupils but this is not always as accurate as it could be, so that sometimes activities are too easy for some pupils or too challenging for others. Marking has improved and pupils understand and appreciate the useful next step comments teachers make. They appreciate the work that is highlighted in green to indicate that learning aims have been met.

The curriculum has improved so that pupils are more engaged in their learning. Pupils say they enjoy practical activities and lessons that link areas of learning together. There are more stimulating starting points for topics, including through the use of visits to the local area and visitors into school. Role play and drama play a significant part in engaging pupils' interest. The school is focused on closing the gap in boys' attainment in writing by considering their interests carefully. Texts are chosen to engage boys, for example the book, *Street Child*, was used as a useful link to work on the Victorians. There are more opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes and in a range of subjects. Some older higher-ability pupils produced thoughtful poems based on their history work on the London Blitz told from the viewpoint of St Paul's Cathedral.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision of how things can improve further so that good provision and outcomes are consistent across the Nursery and Reception classes. She works effectively with teachers and support staff to widen their skills and understanding. Provision in the Nursery, particularly in the indoor environment, provides a good model for the improving Reception classes. The Nursery offers an exciting range of stimulating activities which secure good learning for most children. Although outdoor provision has improved, there is more that could be done to ensure better sustained engagement for all. Parents and carers are welcomed into



the Nursery and Reception classes in the morning to help settle their children and to read with them regularly. It is in the Early Years Foundation Stage that the foundations of good parent partnerships are laid. Children are happy and settled in the Nursery and Reception classes. They develop their social skills well. They play alongside and sometimes with each other thoughtfully, often sharing resources. Accurate assessment information feeds into planning to ensure activities meet learners' needs. This is more effective in the Nursery than in the Reception classes. Special books record children's milestones in their work but they do not include achievements at home. There are plans to develop parents' and carers' contributions to these books. Some adults engage with children very well and are adept at suggesting next steps in learning which flow naturally from children's play but this is inconsistent. Gender differences are apparent in the way children work and play. More needs to be done to challenge this, including exploring ways to engage more boys in mark-making activities.

All are clear that the headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school which is communicated to the whole school community. A recent visit for older pupils to an Oxford college demonstrates the headteacher's high aspirations for pupils. The headteacher is supported by an improving wider leadership team. All leaders are clear about what needs to be done to improve things rapidly. Efforts to improve pupils' writing skills are beginning to impact on their progress and attainment. Self-evaluation is accurate and this, together with systematic monitoring of the school's work and pupils' progress, feeds into detailed and effective development plans.

Members of the governing body have reviewed their effectiveness and are becoming more robust in their challenge and support of school improvement. The governing body receives regular and detailed information about the progress the school makes but is not systematically reviewing the progress of the school's plans to improve. Members of the governing body review detailed achievement data and receive regular updates from leaders at all levels. They benchmark the school's attainment against other schools nationally through scrutiny of independent data. Thorough safeguarding records are systematically recorded.

Following the last inspection the local authority provided support to improve teaching, learning and leadership. Since September 2011, the school has brokered its own effective support through the use of learning consultants, some with links to the local authority. Teachers are positive about the impact of this support in improving the teaching of literacy and mathematics.

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 Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector

September 2010



Annex

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

- Raise attainment by:
 - using information from assessments and marking to plan work that is consistently well matched to pupils' needs in all classes
 - ensuring teachers have a shared understanding of the challenge and expectation required to ensure all pupils make consistently good progress.

- Develop children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by using the outside areas more effectively and ensuring that activities are suitably matched to children's specific learning needs.

- Sharpen the skills of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in using monitoring information to identify proprieties to drive swift improvements.