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23 November 2011

Mr G Linford
Headteacher
Tameside Primary School
Price Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
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Dear Mr Linford

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Tameside Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 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 parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and your School Improvement Partner who all came in to talk to me at such short notice. As part of this monitoring inspection, the procedures for safeguarding children were checked and found to meet requirements.

Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased by 20. Since September 2011, due to the increase in the local birth rate, the school has become a three-form entry school. One member of staff has left and three new staff have been appointed. The staffing turbulence reported at the last inspection has settled down. Staffing is now more stable. The profile of the school pupil population has changed slightly, and there are now more Polish pupils in the school who arrive with little or no English but quickly catch up due to the support they receive.

As a result of the inspection on 30 June and 1 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to raise the attainment of pupils. Since then, the school has maintained its upward trend of year-on-year improvement. Government floor targets have now been met. While attainment still remains below

September 2010



the national average at Key Stages 1 and 2, the school is successfully closing the gap and approaching the national average. This is especially the case in Key Stage 1, where attainment in mathematics and writing are, for the first time, no longer significantly below the national average. Reading is the weakest area and remains a focus for the school. At Key Stage 2, attainment has also improved, but not as dramatically. However, significant strides have been made in the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English, an identified key point for development. Improvement in mathematics, however, lags behind. In both key stages, those pupils with average or above-average ability now make better progress than lower-attaining pupils. This is especially the case with boys at Key Stage 2 in English and at Key Stage 1 with reading.

These improvements have come about due to the close attention that senior staff have placed on ensuring that teachers challenge pupils more. The headteacher leads the school with determination and purpose and has been successful in raising staff morale and engaging them well in the school improvement agenda. Lesson plans are regularly checked and frequent monitoring of teaching has ensured that those teachers in need of additional help receive timely support. Teachers now employ a wider range of strategies to monitor pupil progress. These include:

- detailed and supportive marking in books
- finding time in lessons to discuss progress with individual children
- more rigorous tracking of pupil progress
- appropriate intervention strategies to support those identified as requiring additional support.

Pupils report that they are now more aware of how they can improve their work and find the comments written in their books particularly helpful. They obviously enjoy coming to school, as their behaviour in class continues to be good and their attendance remains broadly similar to the national average.

As part of this monitoring visit, 16 lessons were jointly observed throughout the school with the headteacher. At the last inspection, the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. Since then, teaching quality has improved in most areas of the school, with a higher percentage now judged to be good and none inadequate. However, in some Key Stage 2 classes, teaching quality still remains too inconsistent. In the best lessons observed, teachers challenge pupils through good questioning and lessons are taught at a brisk pace. Thorough preparation of lessons ensures that all pupils receive appropriate support. In the less successful lessons, teachers talk too much and do not make the learning intentions of the lessons clear enough to pupils. Insufficient opportunities are created to check that pupils have understood the work through questioning or by celebrating high quality work in progress.

There has been a purposeful drive to reach out to more parents and carers and provide opportunities for them to get involved with their child's learning. These have included a revision of the Home-School Agreement, additional family learning programmes and the development of the Early Years reading log into home-school communication books. These books provide opportunities for parents and carers to regularly communicate with their class teacher. Open mornings and Present and Praise assemblies for parents and carers are growing in popularity and are now well attended. Increasing numbers of parents and carers have attended accredited basic skills programmes. However, the headteacher and senior staff remain frustrated that some parents and carers, despite written invitations from their children, do not take the opportunity of attending these and other advertised events. Identified hard-to-reach groups within the parent body are still not involved enough in the life of the school or the education of their children.

The work to improve community cohesion has been slower to develop. While there has been a successful International Week that raised pupils' awareness of different Spanish-speaking countries, cultures and customs, there is still not enough outreach work to other British and overseas schools and communities. Tameside pupils do not have sufficient understanding of how other children grow up and develop in different parts of the world. No formal links have been made with a contrasting school in this country or abroad.

There has been good support from the local authority. The School Improvement Partner is a regular visitor and knows the school well. There has been particularly useful external support from a local outstanding school within the Wednesbury Learning Community Trust. Tameside staff have also had the opportunity to observe and share good practice and moderate pupils' work with teachers from other schools within and beyond Wednesbury.

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

Clive Kempton HMI
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise the attainment of pupils by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are always sufficiently extended in their learning, particularly the more able and gifted and talented pupils
 - school leaders improving the consistency of teachers' use of assessment data in planning
 - teachers discussing more consistently with pupils how they think they are doing, whether they are being sufficiently challenged, and offering clear guidance on how they can improve their work.

- Raise the awareness and understanding of parents and carers of how they can be partners with the school in their children's education by:
 - introducing a range of opportunities for parents and carers to work alongside their children in school
 - involving parent and community governors more directly in regular contact with parents
 - encouraging parents to seek guidance and offer their views more frequently on the education of their children.

- Increase the provision for promoting community cohesions so that:
 - pupils develop a wider understanding of the range of communities and cultures in their own country
 - pupils have more opportunities to learn about cultural diversity in the wider world, by establishing links with other communities abroad.