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23 November 2011

Mrs Wood
Headteacher
Girlington Primary School
Girlington Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD8 9NR

Dear Mrs Wood

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Girlington 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 also pass on my thanks to other staff, pupils and the representatives of the governing body with whom I met during the day.

Since the last inspection, the leadership team of the school has been extended and three teachers have left. Five newly qualified teachers joined the school in September 2011 to fill vacant posts and provide temporary cover for other teachers currently on maternity leave. The school has undergone extensive internal refurbishment since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 26 and 27 May 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.

Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 has improved significantly and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics and writing was broadly average in 2011. Improvements to pupils' attainment in reading overall and in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics at this key stage were more modest. At Key Stage 2 there is a less-convincing picture of sustained improvement, particularly in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 by the end of the key stage. In Year 6 in 2011, boys' attainment exceeded that of their female peers and there were also differences in performance between subjects; more pupils made expected progress in mathematics than in English. School data indicate pupils' progress is improving overall, reflecting the improved quality of teaching in all year groups. However, for some identifiable groups of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress remains slower

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than that of their peers. Attendance has risen and most of the small minority of pupils who had high levels of absence are now attending more regularly.

Pupils were keen participants in learning activities during lessons observed with paired work and talk partners being used effectively to help them develop their ideas and understanding. Teachers are planning more interesting and engaging activities that are better matched to pupils' differing learning needs, including higher attaining pupils. 'Steps to success' for the learning objectives in each lesson are helping pupils to make better progress and allowing them to take more responsibility for improving their own work. Similarly, pupils have increasing opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers, developing their ability to identify next steps in their learning. Pupils are also receiving more detailed guidance in their books highlighting what they have done well and the aspects of their work needing more development. However, in most books scrutinised during the inspection, there was little evidence of pupils responding to teacher comments or prompts, reducing the effectiveness with which written feedback consolidates or extends pupils' understanding. Pupils are aware of their targets but the school has rightly recognised that teachers' marking does not make regular reference to where pupils have made progress in relation to their individual targets and where more work still needs to be done.

Leaders and managers beyond the headteacher are more widely involved in the monitoring and evaluation of provision and pupils' outcomes. This has deepened their understanding of both whole-school priorities and those specific to their areas of responsibility. Members of the wider leadership team have also taken on a greater role in leading improvement activity and can judge with increasing accuracy the impact of their work. However, feedback to teachers following lesson observations does not always focus sharply on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Both 'in-house' and external professional development opportunities have been used effectively to improve teaching quality and the skills of the leadership team. External partnerships, including those with the Locality Achievement Partnership and the local authority have effectively supported the school's improvement. Data are being used very carefully to track pupils' progress and targets are being set with an increasing degree of challenge to drive improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2. Regular pupil progress meetings are effective in ensuring teachers have high expectations for the achievement of each individual pupil. Interventions to address identified underperformance are timely and well matched to pupil need. Members of the governing body have developed their knowledge of pupil progress data and so they are able to provide an increasing degree of challenge for senior leaders.

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,

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector

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Annex

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

- Increase accountability and embed leadership more widely across the whole staff, by:
 - involving middle managers more in monitoring provision and taking action to improve teaching.

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and in the lower juniors to be at least good, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use pupils' assessment data effectively in order to provide challenging tasks which meet all pupils' learning needs.

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that attainment is raised, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers give pupils clear feedback so that they know exactly what to do to improve their work.