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30 November 2011

Mr David Bird
Headteacher
Shelley Primary School
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Dear Mr Bird

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 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, staff and the governor who met with me.

The inclusion manager joined the staff shortly after the last inspection. There were some changes in roles at the end of the last academic year with one teacher leaving, a new one joining and Early Years Foundation Stage leadership changing hands.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 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:

inadequate progress in making improvements

and

inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement remains satisfactory. Children join the Reception Year with overall skill levels above those normally seen. They make satisfactory progress so the majority achieve the development expected. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Between Years 3 and 6, progress is satisfactory overall but as at the last inspection, it is inconsistent. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected levels in English and mathematics when they leave is a little above average. However, not all pupils do as well as they could. Notably, the more able do not all reach the higher levels they are capable of and some less able pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not achieve their full potential. Progress is best in lessons when tasks are engaging and meet pupils' varied needs, and when they know how to assess and improve their work independently. Weaker evidence of these features in lessons for the older pupils explains their slower progress.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall but improving. Staff have visited strong settings in other schools to learn from effective practice. Their assessments of children's progress now involve collecting a wider range of evidence, including in learning journals. These are being used more precisely to organise the learning environment and activities so that children choose tasks which challenge them. This work is not yet consistent enough to ensure good progress.

Work to improve teaching for older pupils has had too little impact. Strengths in the teaching of Years 1 and 2 have been sustained, alongside good relationship between all staff and pupils. However, less effective aspects of teaching in Years 3 to 6 persist. These centre on inconsistent use of assessment to underpin learning. Work last year on teachers' understanding of pupils' attainment, and a new tracking system this year, give teachers a clearer awareness of what pupils should achieve in order to reach high targets by Year 6. This awareness supports teaching well in Years 1 and 2 but is not used systematically to plan older pupils' lessons. Activities do not cater fully for the wide ability range in the mixed-age classes. Opportunities are missed to target questions at pupils based on their attainment, or to adjust work for small groups so it challenges them. Lesson introductions include more discussion but teachers do not always check pupils' understanding. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, although they are occasionally too passive. In-lesson support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is caring but not always focused enough on getting pupils thinking for themselves. Too little is sometimes expected of all pupils in deciding how to improve their work to reach their targets. Marking remains variable in quality. It does not refer enough to pupils' targets, some poor presentation is overlooked and pupils are not always asked to respond to it.

Some effective steps have been taken to increase the impact of subjects across the curriculum on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Cross-curricular topics have been set up, which pupils like. These are well planned to broaden their experiences and connect learning in different subjects. Staff are keen to ensure pupils make good

progress in each linked curriculum area, including literacy and numeracy, however planning is not yet rigorous enough to guarantee this.

The headteacher and senior staff are determined to raise attainment by the end of Year 6. A positive impact has been made on some areas for improvement raised by the last inspection, but in the key area of teaching not enough has been achieved. The new tracking system offers the potential to check pupils' progress rigorously so as to evaluate teaching, hold teachers to account and identify underachieving pupils. More clearly expressed impact measures and monitoring strategies in strategic development plans have improved these. Nevertheless, it remains hard to see the attainment expected of year groups or groups of pupils. This hinders crisp checking, including by governors, of whether pupils' progress is good throughout the school. The monitoring of teaching is effective in identifying strengths in teachers' practice. However, checking the impact on pupils' progress and outlining what teachers could do better are not sharp enough. For example, observations of staff do not refer back to areas previously cited for improvement. Subject leaders for mathematics and English are making better use of assessment data to monitor provision but have too few opportunities to observe teaching in order to know what needs improving. The inclusion manager has made a sound start on improving provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She recognises that there is further to go to ensure good day-to-day teaching but additional support work is now based on better identification of pupils' needs and training for staff is more effective.

Support from the local authority has made insufficient impact on improving the school's overall effectiveness. However, recent monitoring has begun to challenge inconsistencies in pupils' progress and to raise this as an issue to address with school leaders.

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

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment and progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by improving the consistency and quality of teaching, ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used fully to plan work that meets pupils' different learning needs and aptitudes
 - lesson introductions are shorter and focused, and provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning
 - marking shows pupils how to improve their work, making reference to their individual target
 - topics provide opportunities for pupils to use and practise all of their core skills.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that planned actions for improvement, where appropriate, relate to raising attainment and progress and show how they are to be monitored and evaluated against clearly defined outcomes.

- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing more opportunities for children to explore and initiate their own learning across all the areas of learning.