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Mr D Coaché
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Coaché

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Andrew's CofE First

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 December 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 those staff and pupils I met and the representatives from the local authority and the governing body to whom I spoke.

Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator have been appointed and there have been several changes of teaching staff.

As a result of the inspection on 15 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils join Reception at below the expected level for their age across all areas of learning. By the time they leave at the end of Year 5, they have reached a level of attainment in English and mathematics that is broadly in line with that expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average. Pupils' writing has significantly improved and is now also broadly average, having previously been below average at both Key Stages 1 and 2. There is a three-year rising trend of improvement in writing at the end of Key Stage 1. Progress in learning in lessons seen during the inspection was consistently good following improvements in the quality of teaching. Pupils currently in Year 5 are now working towards levels in English and mathematics close to age-related expectations, having left Key Stage 1

September 2010



with a level of attainment below average. Learning in lessons is good because groups of pupils are challenged to do as well as they can from their starting points. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and improved tracking and marking procedures ensure that pupils know what they have to do to improve.

The school has made concerted efforts to address shortcomings in writing and, more widely, literacy. The building of capacity to improve through the appointment of a new deputy headteacher as literacy coordinator has been integral to this. The introduction of a marking and presentation policy has led to consistency in the good quality of marking by teachers and improved quality in the appearance and presentation of pupils' work. Pupils now receive more challenging targets for literacy, linked more closely to where they should be for their age. The curriculum has been revised to give pupils more opportunities for reading and writing. The school has placed a strong focus on encouraging pupils' reading, especially for boys, so that they can improve their writing. The school has invested heavily in texts and literacy activities that appeal to boys and, consequently, boys' borrowing from the library has increased significantly. Boys enjoy writing, especially factual accounts such as newspaper reports but also creative story writing.

All of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. New appointments, combined with a rigorous programme of monitoring lessons and training, have led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and ensured that all teaching consistently matches that of the best. Senior and middle leaders have established a regular programme of discussing pupil progress with individual teachers. This is highly effective. Teachers have established a good ethos for learning where expectations are high and pupils are challenged to do as well as they can. Lessons move at a brisk pace, with pupils quick to settle down to tasks. Staff have been trained to make more effective use of questioning, and this is evident in lessons where pupils are given different levels of questions to respond to.

Pupils are consistently set targets so that they know how to improve. These are mostly in their books in a form of words that they can understand. Marking with highlighters gives pupils a clear indication of what they have done well and how they can improve. In the best marking, pupils are involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently good. Pupils work well with each other, supporting each other in paired and group work.

Higher attaining pupils are given more challenging work to do in lessons, particularly in literacy, although higher attaining older pupils said they sometimes find mathematics lessons too easy. Pupils work independently on challenging writing tasks and, in the best lessons, they work on drafts to improve them by using more sophisticated vocabulary or complex grammar structures. The quality of learning intentions in written lesson plans is variable. There is also inconsistency in the extent to which the focus for the deployment of additional adults is clearly identified.

The local authority has very recently provided support to the school. This has not as yet led to the observation of teaching so it is too early to see the impact of this.

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

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - creating opportunities, especially for boys, to practise, edit and improve their writing more extensively and independently
 - ensuring that all learning builds upon pupils' prior experiences.

- Improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching by:
 - sharing the existing best practice between staff so that all teaching is good or better and ensuring that leaders monitor this effectively
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of questioning when assessing pupils' progress in lessons
 - making sure that teachers identify the next steps in learning for all pupils, using child-friendly language.

- Consistently provide a greater level of challenge for more-able pupils in lessons by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to inform planning
 - precisely matching work to meet their needs.