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14 December 2011

Mr M Gould
Headteacher
John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School
Upper Road
Madeley
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Dear Mr Gould

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 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 the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils and the representative from the local authority.

Since the last inspection, the school has undergone several major changes including merging with the neighbouring infant school. A new headteacher took up post in September 2011 along with a new senior leadership team. This team is made up of three newly appointed phase leaders, a newly appointed special educational needs coordinator and a newly appointed literacy coordinator. There is a new governing body made up from governors from both schools. There are two newly qualified teachers in post, one of whom is covering a maternity leave. The school has a designated unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties.

As a result of the inspection on 29 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment remains low but is improving. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve 79% Level 4 and above in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. School data indicates that Year 6 pupils will also achieve 38% Level 5 in English and 32% Level 5 in mathematics. This is considerably better than in previous years. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress because the school has ensured that all

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teachers have an accurate and shared understanding of assessment criteria. The school has introduced a standardised assessment system from Year 1 upwards and there is now a consistent approach to assessing English and mathematics. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 is accurate and moderated both externally and internally. All staff now have a good understanding of pupils' starting points and an accurate expectation of how well they will progress in their next stage of learning. As a result of these new systems, teachers plan satisfactorily to meet the needs of different groups of pupils in their lessons. All staff now have a shared responsibility for pupils' progress across the school. Staff understand pupils' starting points and share the expectation that all pupils must make at least two sub-levels of progress in each year. In addition to this, the school sets itself realistic targets for all groups of pupils and individuals. Class groupings have changed to create two classes in Years 5 and 6. This new arrangement has helped staff to carefully tailor pupils' work and meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are middle and lower attaining, with greater accuracy. Pupils commented favourably about the setting arrangements and how this has helped them to work in pairs and groups and confidently tackle more complex work.

The school has made good progress in addressing weaknesses in provision for all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Up-to-date individual education plans are in place. These plans are shared with parents and carers as well as pupils. Those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs receive their allocated support and additional help when it is required. All pupils have individual learning targets based on standardised assessment. These targets help to inform pupils of the next steps in their learning. During the monitoring visit, pupils were able to explain their targets and could demonstrate how they were meeting them.

Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils commented on how safe they felt and how well they all got on with each other. Older pupils behave with great maturity and sensitivity towards others and respect each other's differences. This contributes to the calm and caring atmosphere in the school.

In the majority of lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers understand how to model what they expect pupils to do. Teachers' marking is satisfactory. In the best examples, marking identifies what pupils need to do to improve, and provides them with opportunities to practise these skills. Pupils are also encouraged to add their own comments about their learning. Guided sessions in reading, writing and mathematics have improved the quality of pupils' work. Teachers are clear about the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and plan work to address these weaknesses. Teachers' questioning in lessons is good. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully match questions so that they are carefully matched to the range of pupils' starting points. All groups of pupils are appropriately challenged and teachers quickly pick up misconceptions and address them in the lesson. Homework is well planned and is beginning to encourage pupils

to think about topics in greater depth. Parents and carers commented that it would be helpful if they knew what pupils were studying so that they could be more involved in supporting their children. Computers are now networked throughout the school and the staff are able to share their good teaching and learning practice. The Forest Schools initiative has been trialled and will be introduced across the school from January 2012. Pupils commented on how much they enjoyed the Forest School work.

Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, and ably supported by the senior and middle leaders, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Robust school data holds all teachers accountable for pupils' progress in their lessons. As a result, there is a sharp focus on improving teaching and learning. The school's development plan is succinct, and closely aligned to key priorities. The new performance management system strongly reflects the areas for improvement. The senior leadership team has begun a cycle of lesson observations and from next term this will be extended to middle managers. All monitoring and evaluation data is shared with the effective governing body, whose members use this information to set high expectations for the school. The school uses the high quality support from the local authority well to enhance teaching and learning and teachers' use of assessment. Good use is made of external programmes to encourage staff to develop their understanding of teaching and learning and management roles. This drive to build a greater capacity for sustained improvement has positively influenced the quality of teaching and learning and has accurately informed self-evaluation. Learning in the classroom has been transformed. Senior leaders, middle managers and the governing body have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has greatly improved the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

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 Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure middle and lower attaining pupils make good progress by:
 - providing them with clear models of what teachers expect them to produce for the tasks they are given
 - ensuring marking identifies and corrects errors in basic literacy and numeracy work
 - checking pupils' understanding more frequently in lessons in order to correct any misunderstandings that exist.
- Ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress by:
 - ensuring targets on individual education plans are accurately matched to pupils' levels of attainment
 - consistently reminding pupils of what their targets are and how to achieve them.
- Make better use of data on pupils' progress by December 2010 in order to:
 - identify and address differences in performance between ability groups and classes
 - compare this with the results of lesson observations to get an accurate picture of the quality of teaching
 - identify the most important priorities for improvement when drawing up the school development plan.