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Mrs Taylor
Headteacher
Bailey Green Primary School
West Bailey
Killingworth
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE12 6QL

Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bailey Green Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 January 2012, 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 staff, the two representatives of the governing body and the pupils who gave up their time to talk to me during the day.

At the time of the last inspection, an interim headteacher was in post. Since then there have been three changes in staff, including the appointment of the current headteacher in May 2011. The leadership team is being restructured to include the position of a deputy headteacher and a manager with responsibility for Key Stage 2.

As a result of the inspection on 16 November 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.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Actions taken to raise achievement, particularly those taken since May 2011, have had a discernible impact on pupils' progress in lessons. The curriculum has been transformed to energise and excite pupils through interesting topics that also maximise opportunities for pupils to write for many purposes across the curriculum. This approach sits successfully alongside the teaching of reading, spelling and writing which are taught across the school systematically, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Every day there are short, snappy sessions in ERIC (everyone reading in class) and basic skills which consolidate pupils' learning from other lessons and introduce and develop core skills efficiently. The introduction of the 'Big-Write', where all pupils write creatively once a week at the same time, has resulted in a dramatic improvement in pupils' writing. Their big-write files show

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evidence of good and sometimes outstanding progress. They show, and pupils confirmed in discussions, that writing is very important and valued. Pupils say they really enjoy the calm and purposeful atmosphere created for these sessions; the candles and the calming lights add to the respect they feel for their work. They also say their parents and carers like being involved in their writing through the weekly 'talk-homework' where together they discuss their ideas and the 'wow' words that will captivate the readers of their work. Pupils particularly value the high quality feedback they receive from teachers, which celebrates what they have done well and helps them understand what they need to do to improve their writing further. Leaders know there is still more to do to embed the good practice in marking seen in some classes across the school.

The quality of teaching

Lesson observations, school tracking data and book scrutiny show that leaders are improving the quality and impact of teaching on pupils' progress in lessons successfully. A consistent approach to assessing pupils' work and teachers' feedback and marking of their work has been developed across the school and teachers are embedding this approach well. Teachers record pupils' achievements in lessons meticulously in their own learning journals and this information is used to inform the next day's lessons so that the individual needs of pupils can be planned for and met. This means that virtually all pupils, including those who have a special educational need and those with a disability are provided with activities that are well matched to their starting points; enabling them to progress swiftly in their tasks. In lessons, time is built in to enable pupils to reflect on teachers' feedback, including comments made in books. Through good use of questioning, teachers are drawing out pupils' understanding and tackling quickly any misconceptions increasingly successfully. Teachers, pupils and teaching support staff all speak enthusiastically about how much lessons have improved, how much fun they are and how hard they all work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and safety were judged to be good at the time of the last inspection. However, pupils spoken to were adamant that behaviour is even better because of the rewards and sanctions approach developed, which they deem to be very fair. They speak enthusiastically about how any good behaviour is captured and celebrated; making them strive to do even better in the future. They say there are very few incidents of bullying because the headteacher will not tolerate it and because everyone gets along so well together. Pupils and staff say they feel valued and are proud to be part of this tolerant and caring school community. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their relationships with each other and those established with adults were seen to be often exemplary during the visit and their social and moral development are improving well. The curriculum is increasingly improving pupils' willingness to be open to new ideas and to explore language and meaning, for example, in art and culture. Pupils say the wide range of after-school activities, interesting visits out of school and visitors to school add to their enjoyment and this is evident in their rapidly improving attendance, which is above average.



The quality of leadership and management of the school

The interim headteacher arrangements halted the decline in the school. Since May 2011, inspirational leadership and management have contributed to pupils' rapidly improving achievement, behaviour and attendance and the high morale among staff and pupils is clearly evident. The reinvigorated senior team, alongside developing middle managers are involved in monitoring and evaluating what is happening in lessons more fully, for example, through lesson observation, book scrutiny, regular analysis of pupils' assessment information and by their regular reports to the headteacher on the progress pupils are making in the classes they teach. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher teach regularly and model what outstanding teaching looks like. Such actions together with peer observations, increased professional development opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants are making a positive difference to the quality of teaching and its impact. Middle managers and teachers say they relish the additional responsibilities they have been afforded, including the way that they are now rigorously held to account for the achievements of pupils through the cycle of monitoring and evaluation in place and robust performance management arrangements. They also welcome their inclusion in the school's development planning and self-evaluation processes. Members of the governing body report that they were shocked at the satisfactory judgement at the time of the inspection. They have completely overhauled procedures to make sure they are well informed about how well the school is doing and have the right information to hand so they can hold leaders to account robustly for the impact of their work. They are also involved in analysing pupil progress information, monitoring what is going on in lessons and are now fully involved in the life of the school.

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,

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve attainment and achievement in writing by:
 - including more opportunities for developing pupils' writing skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that children have the opportunity to apply the knowledge of letters and their sounds they are taught, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2
 - introducing the systematic teaching and marking of spelling.

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making it clear to pupils the steps they need to take in lessons to meet the intended learning outcome
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in their books so that they can improve their work
 - matching work more accurately for more-able pupils so they make more rapid progress
 - always checking pupils' understanding especially during whole-class teaching sessions.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all leaders and managers are more involved in evaluating what is happening in lessons, so that they can make a more informed contribution to improving teaching and learning
 - ensuring that members of the governing body regularly evaluate the work of the school and hold it to account more effectively.