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Mr R Phoenix-Stone
Headteacher
Even Swindon Primary School
Pasture Close
Swindon
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Dear Mr Phoenix-Stone

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour: monitoring inspection of Even Swindon Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 February 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please thank the Chair of the Governing Body and the staff and pupils who gave their time to speak to me. I was also grateful for the opportunity to speak to a few parents and carers.

Since the last inspection there have been very few staff changes. The deputy headteacher left at the end of July 2011. There is one new governor. However, at present there are a number of vacancies on the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 13–14 October 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 the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.

Achievement of pupils at the school

From starting points that are well below average, pupils' attainment is rising rapidly. Progress rates for most pupils are good and in some cases outstanding. Although attainment remains low overall, particularly for current Year 6 pupils, there is clear evidence that attainment in other year groups is closer to the national average. In Year 5, the attainment of more-able pupils in English and mathematics is above average.

The school has taken positive and determined action to raise pupils' achievement. It has involved all staff in introducing a rigorous and effective system for tracking the attainment and progress of all classes and groups of pupils. Assessments take place regularly and this process enables teachers to identify pupils at risk of underachievement. Intervention programmes tailored to pupils' needs are put in place to accelerate progress and address misconceptions. These programmes are regularly reviewed and pupils' progress measured systematically. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because activities are matched to their needs and they receive effective support.

In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress. Pupils enjoy their learning because activities are fun and interesting; they are carefully matched to their learning needs. In one lesson, for lower-ability Year 6 pupils in mathematics, the learning about place value was very practical. Pupils demonstrated the movement of numbers as they multiplied by 10 and 100. Careful use of correct mathematical language by the class teacher and effective use of resources enabled pupils to develop a good understanding of multiplying decimals. As a result, pupils made good progress in their learning.

All pupils have targets for improvement in writing and mathematics. Regular and effective use of steps to success and pupils' self-assessment enable them to identify when they have achieved the objectives for learning in lessons. Consequently, pupils make a positive contribution to their own learning.

The quality of teaching

The school's determined actions to improve the quality of teaching have ensured a more consistent approach to planning, assessment and marking. Displays in classrooms are bright and lively and support pupils' learning in lessons well. Assessment information is used increasingly well to match learning objectives and activities to the differing abilities of pupils. Teachers' good subject knowledge and clear explanations enable pupils to engage effectively in learning. Lessons are characterised by energy and enthusiasm, and move at a swift pace. Good questioning is combined with high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In a Year 2 mathematics lessons, pupils made good gains in the learning about division, by equally sharing objects and recording the result correctly as number sentences on small whiteboards. The class teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to provide a clear visual demonstration of this mathematical concept.

There has been an effective focus on improving the consistency and quality of marking and feedback to pupils. Regular marking pin-points strengths and provides advice on how to improve. In the best examples, pupils responded to the marking and showed the improvements suggested. Pupils say the marking of their work is

helpful and enables them to understand how to improve their work. As a consequence, they are motivated to improve their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour and the extent to which pupils feel safe were both judged to be good. Safeguarding procedures were also judged to be good. Pupils' level of behaviour has been maintained and the number of exclusions has been reduced. In the lessons observed and around the school, pupils behave well, are polite, courteous and respectful. They have good attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. One of the strategies used to support pupils who experience behavioural difficulties has been the use of 'Pets as Therapy'. The school dog, Cullen, provides valuable support to pupils who experience a range of traumas and difficulties. The school has successfully integrated some pupils from other schools with challenging behaviour. During the inspection, the behaviour of these pupils was also good. Pupils say they feel safe and learn about how to keep themselves safe when using new technologies. They say incidents of bullying are rare. The school has successfully improved attendance rates and current rates of attendance show that pupils are keen to come to school, which reflects their enjoyment of learning and school life.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Systems for gathering and analysing data on pupils' attainment and progress have been strengthened. The progress of all pupils and groups of pupils is reviewed regularly and teaching is evaluated to identify pupils' progress. There is greater rigour in lesson observations carried out by senior leaders, who focus on the learning and progress pupils make in lessons. Effective feedback identifies strengths and areas for improvement, which successfully contributes to the cycle of improvement. The school has made effective use of staff training to share good practice and improve the consistency in assessments to support learning in lessons. The senior leadership team have clear roles and responsibilities linked to monitoring pupils' progress. Improvements to the curriculum serve to motivate pupils through 'Wow' days and interesting and memorable activities. There is a carefully planned progression of skills across the school. Senior leaders and subject leaders regularly check on standards and progress in their areas of responsibility. Consequently, through these actions the school is building a better capacity for further improvements.

The local authority has provided effective support and professional guidance through consultants working alongside teaching and support staff. Increasingly, the school take more of a lead in using the expertise of its own staff to improve outcomes for

pupils. Consequently, the level of support provided by the local authority has reduced.

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

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good by:
 - sharing good practice more effectively across the school
 - ensuring that teachers always have high expectations for pupils' progress
 - improving the rigour of lesson observations carried out by senior leaders by placing a sharper emphasis on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
 - ensuring assessment information is used to match work closely to the needs of pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning through assessment.
- Strengthen academic monitoring systems by:
 - ensuring robust systems are available for planning and measuring the impact of support programmes
 - sharing more widely amongst the senior leadership the responsibilities for checking on pupils' learning and progress.