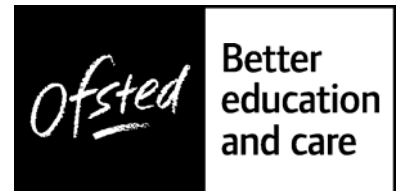


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Mrs Jan Upton  
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Tuesday 20 June 2006

Dear Mrs Upton

### **OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE**

Thank you very much for the help that you and the staff gave when I visited your school on Tuesday 20 June 2006, and also for the time you gave to our telephone discussions in advance of the visit. May I also extend my thanks to pupils, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority for taking time to speak with me?

Having considered the evidence presented by the school and the local authority, together with evidence from Ofsted data, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress on the issues identified at the last inspection in October 2005.

As a result of this inspection, the school was asked to look at three matters: achievement and standards, particularly in relation to the more able and those for whom English is an additional language; the curriculum, specifically information and communication technology (ICT); and, governance.

Completed assessments for Years 2 and 6 indicate that these pupils have made broadly satisfactory academic progress over the course of the year. In some cases there have been rapid gains in learning over short periods of time, but rates of progress still vary considerably. Early information about the most recent national tests indicates that the Year 6 results will be largely similar to those of last year, with an increase in the proportion reaching the nationally expected level in mathematics. The modest upward trend in Year 2 results has been maintained in reading and mathematics. The use of a computerised programme for recording attainment information is valuable. It enables the school to identify its more able pupils quickly, check the rate of progress for all pupils, and modify individual targets where necessary.

Much attention has been given to improving the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Developments in this area have been rapid. As a result, these pupils are helped consistently to take a full part in lessons. Having successfully established a solid foundation for assessing and meeting these pupils' needs, attention is now being given to 'tailoring' what each pupil needs to learn to the specific needs of the individual and the characteristics of her or his first language.

The same degree of closely focused attention has not been given to raising the achievement of higher attaining pupils. Lesson activities are modified for pupils of different abilities but expectations of the more able are still not high enough. As a result, lessons do not always demand enough of these pupils or from those with average attainment. It is essential that this shortcoming is urgently addressed in order to accelerate progress for all pupils.

Substantial improvements have been made to ICT. There has been much financial investment in resources and pupils clearly enjoy their increased use of these facilities. Statutory requirements for teaching this subject are now met through comprehensive planning. Aspects of the subject have been tackled one at a time so that the expertise of staff and pupils grows and develops systematically. Assessment is also underway. However, improvements are still bedding in. In particular, the school now needs to make sure that full use is made of computers during lessons.

Much has been done to stabilise the governing body and build its capacity for challenging the school's work and performance. It has firm and experienced leadership and is working closely with the school and the new headteacher. However, developments are still at a fairly early stage. It is, therefore, important that the governing body is able to operate effectively on its own before moving away from the support currently given by the local authority.

The local authority's statement of action clearly illustrates that it had recognised and responded to the school's needs before its inspection. The school continues to benefit from its strong support in a wide range of areas. The statement of action has been particularly effective in directing improvement to the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language, to ICT and to governance, and to working alongside senior staff in developing these areas.



The quality of teaching has also improved as a result of the local authority's work. There is a clear understanding of the school's changing needs and support has been modified appropriately. Having helped the school to make good progress on some of its main issues, more should now be done to ensure that specific attention is given to raising the achievement of more able pupils.

My thanks, once again, to you and the staff, and I hope you find these evaluations useful.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies  
Lead inspector