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Thursday 15 June 2006

Mrs Helen Cooper
The Headteacher
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Crudwell
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Dear Mrs Cooper

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I visited your school on 14 June 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am also grateful to the local authority (LA) link adviser and the vice chair of governors for arranging to meet with me.

As a result of its inspection in November 2005, the school was asked to look at three matters in relation to Reception and Years 1 to 3: improve standards and progress in reading, writing and mathematics; improve the quality of teaching; and, improve the quality of leadership of the Foundation Stage and English and mathematics.

Having considered carefully all 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 good progress on the issues identified at the last inspection.

Standards and progress in the Reception class and in Years 1, 2 and 3 are improving at a good rate. The school has comprehensive, high quality systems for analysing and tracking the progress of individual pupils and whole classes. Regular, systematic discussion and evaluation of this information are used for planning at all levels. A range of strategies is helping eradicate underachievement. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties is effectively monitored. Well managed teacher assistants, better planning by teachers, and specific strategies to help individuals, ensure that these pupils now make good progress.

The quality of teaching in Reception and in Years 1, 2 and 3 has improved greatly since the last inspection. This is reflected in the good progress made by many pupils. Lesson planning takes account of groups of pupils with

broadly similar abilities. This planning should be sharpened to develop a wider range of tasks to meet the specific needs of individuals. In the Reception and Year 1, independent learning is being successfully fostered through well organised and clear classroom routines.

Leadership of the Foundation Stage is outstanding, provision has been transformed, and the quality of teaching has improved as a result. Very effective planning has focused on the key areas that needed to change. The quality of the indoor learning environment has improved dramatically. This enables children to be more independent in their learning as well as allowing for focused group work to take place. The result is that the children are making good progress. The outdoor learning environment is limited but the school has well developed plans to make significant improvements.

The leadership of English is developing well because of carefully targeted support from the headteacher and the local authority. This has been particularly successful in developing the skills to evaluate how well the subject is doing. The impact of improved leadership in mathematics has yet to be felt as the subject leader only returned to school very recently. In the short time since her return she has acquired a good grasp of the situation in mathematics and has begun to check standards and construct very apt plans for development of the subject.

The headteacher has successfully developed a culture of teamwork and a sense of purpose in the school. Teachers and subject leaders are held accountable for the progress of the pupils in their charge. They are developing the use of data on pupils' progress, target setting and planning of work that crosses several subjects to improve the progress made by the pupils. The governing body is beginning to provide effective support through its monitoring activities and the questions it is posing to the school about its performance.

The local authority support has been effective. The advisory headteacher has worked successfully with the headteacher and subject leaders to develop planning and evaluation strategies. The LA monitoring programme has made clear to the school what is going well and what has to be improved. As the responsibility for providing the main support to the school changes from the advisory headteacher to the school's adviser, the LA should ensure that continuity is maintained so that the current momentum for improvement is not lost.

Yours sincerely

Tom Winskill
Her Majesty's Inspector