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Mr Richard Hatt
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Thursday 15 June 2006

Dear Mr Hatt,

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when my colleague Boyd Gunnell HMI and 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 our visit. Please also pass on my particular thanks to those pupils and staff who met with us, the chair of governors and the advisor from the local authority (LA) for the time they gave.

Having considered carefully all the evidence presented by the school and the LA, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress overall on the issues identified at the last inspection.

As a result of its inspection in January 2006 the school was asked to look at four matters: ensure that work in English, mathematics and science is matched closely to pupils' abilities so that they are always challenged to do their best; ensure pupils have sharply focused individual targets so that teachers can plan the next stage of their learning in order to move them on; analyse information about National Curriculum levels in more detail so that pupils' progress can be monitored and the school has a better understanding of its effectiveness; and, give pupils more guidance and advice on how to improve their work.

Targets are in place for all pupils in literacy and numeracy. The pupils know their individual targets and the class and year group targets are clearly displayed. What the teacher wants the pupils to learn is explained and referred to during lessons. School subject leaders and the senior management team, working alongside LA consultants, are developing skills and knowledge in the setting and use of targets and they have provided much valuable training for the whole staff. The school is well placed to implement practical, effective systems for checking and tracking the pupils'



progress. The time and energy staff have expended on this work is testament to their commitment to achieve improvement.

Steps are being taken to ensure staff have a good understanding of the data from the assessments of pupils and how it can be used within the classroom and to evaluate performance across the school. In mathematics, an analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses was undertaken last year. The results have been used to sharpen planning and set class and group targets for improvement. The school's data confirms that pupils' attainment has improved as a result of this work. LA consultants are working with the school to help ensure that the selection, analysis and use of data are as effective as possible. The school's action plan shows that similar analyses will be undertaken in other subjects but overall the plan is not focused precisely enough on the impact it needs to make on pupils' attainment and progress.

Visits to lessons indicate better use of questioning by staff and well focused help particularly for the less able pupils. What the teacher wants the pupils to learn is made clear to them and classroom displays reinforce the accurate use of vocabulary and highlight targets. Pupils' work is regularly marked, errors are corrected, and the written feedback offers encouragement. There are pockets of good practice where marking is developmental and shows the pupils what they need to do to improve their work. However, there is not enough of this type of feedback and that which exists is very largely directed at below average and least able pupils.

Teachers plan work to match the pupils' differing needs and the ways in which they learn best. However, there is insufficient academic challenge for pupils of average and above average ability and there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply recently learned skills and take more responsibility for their own learning. For example, whilst recent developments in assessment have led to some improvement in the pupils' investigational skills in science, there is scope for much more practical work of this nature.

The school has received well focused support from the LA, which has produced a good statement of action. If implemented effectively in close collaboration with the school, this has the potential to improve the outcomes for pupils.

I hope you find these evaluations helpful in taking your school forward.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald HMI