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Mrs I Baxter  
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Dear Mrs Baxter

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 November 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 23 and 24 May 2006, the school was asked to: eliminate the unsatisfactory teaching and improve teaching generally by speeding up the pace of learning in lessons and raising teachers' expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining by ensuring that all pupils are challenged throughout the lesson; and, improve teachers' use of assessment in lessons so that they are able to challenge all pupils to do their best, particularly those who are more able.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress.

Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover of staff and there are now three new teachers with a class responsibility. The quality of teaching is improving, although there is still too much teaching that is only satisfactory. Improvements in the teaching of English have been good mainly because of a clear focus on introducing successful strategies that engage children in their learning and make sure the progress they make is accelerated. One particularly successful strategy seen during the monitoring visit was the way teachers shared 'success criteria' in lessons so that children could clearly see what they were expected to learn. For example, in one good lesson the success criteria were effectively used to help children identify what they needed to do so that they made good progress when writing a play script about Peter Pan.

There has been satisfactory improvement in the use of assessment and the school is building up a sound picture of how well children are doing. There has been good improvement in the assessment of writing and teachers have a firm grasp of where children are and what they need to do next. Teachers' plans are informed by assessment and in most planning the work for the more able children is appropriately challenging. In many of the lessons seen children were encouraged to assess their own work using the success criteria for the lesson. This strategy helped children evaluate how well they had achieved. All children are given targets in English and mathematics. They know that they are on either a red, green or yellow target, but the complex wording of targets does not always help them understand precisely what the target means.

The school's intense focus on literacy has meant that developments in mathematics have lagged behind. In some lessons, the tasks did not match the range of children's abilities nor did they allow children to quickly get down to focusing on the mathematics they were expected to learn. Children were less engaged in what was going on and they were less responsive to teachers' questions and so the pace of their learning was not good enough. The school is aware of these issues in the teaching of mathematics and have good plans in place to tackle the weaker teaching that currently exists.

The monitoring of teaching is robust and the school has set itself challenging targets to increase the proportion of good and better teaching. All teachers regularly have their lessons observed and useful feedback identifies strengths and areas for further development.

As a result of more effective teaching, standards in English, mathematics and science have risen. In the 2006 national tests there were huge jumps in the standards children achieved in English showing that children in this year group had made better progress. Standards in mathematics improved the least and are still well below average. The challenging target set for mathematics was not met and, although the school feels confident that things will improve in 2007, there is a big hill to climb. Standards across the school have improved and there is evidence that this better picture overall is helping children to make up for lost ground.

The school has received good support from the local authority (LA). There has been a determination to keep a close watch on the school's development and to provide the necessary support and challenge when needed. Local authority advisory consultant staff have effectively worked alongside teachers and have modelled good practice that has now been taken on board.

The headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher, continues to lead the school in the right direction. The school's evaluation of its provision and rate of progress is excellent. The school has a positive feel and everyone is part of the purposeful drive to improve the school. This includes children

whose behaviour has improved and is good when they enjoy their learning. The school currently has an acting assistant headteacher seconded to the school for one year, a numeracy coordinator relatively new to the post, and a literacy coordinator absent due to illness. The school still has some way to go to secure the improvements made and raise the quality of teaching to better than satisfactory.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Cook  
Her Majesty's Inspector