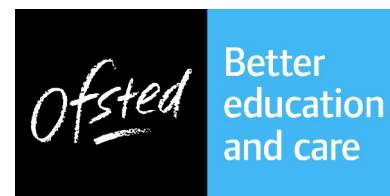


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6 October 2006

Dear Mr Naik

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I visited your school on 5 October 2006. Please also pass on my thanks to those pupils and staff who met with me and to your chair of governors for the time she gave.

As a result of its inspection in October 2005 the school was asked to address three areas for improvement: to improve teaching to ensure it meets the specific learning needs of individual pupils across the curriculum; establish systems for checking pupils' progress and use of the information to identify where and why pupils are experiencing problems; to improve the quality and rigour of procedures for management and governance of the school to ensure resources are used to best effect.

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

New management arrangements for allocating pupils to teaching groups according to their ability rather than age, combined with whole school training on assessment for learning techniques and the recent implementation of these in English and mathematics, have done much to sharpen the focus in teaching to better meet pupils' learning needs. This work is at an early stage but is already making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Plans to spread the practice more widely across the curriculum are well founded but the timescale of two years before they are fully implemented is too slow. Teachers' plans clearly identify what all pupils are to learn in the mathematics and English lessons observed. Pupils have responded well to the changes in teaching and participate well in lessons: they listen attentively and when challenged explain the strategies they have used to solve mathematical problems. The small steps they are making to develop and improve their

reading, writing and application of number skills are clearly evident in their books and demonstrate good progress this term.

Procedures for work scrutiny and a new marking policy have recently been introduced and pupils are beginning to engage in peer assessment. Teachers' marking still does not consistently explain what pupils need to do to improve to reach the next level. Learning targets, whilst regularly set, are not always couched in ways that are measurable or used sufficiently to check pupils' progress.

The school has reviewed systems for checking pupils' progress. Information from tests and teacher assessments enables the school to broadly identify pupils' attainment in relation to the national curriculum levels in the core subjects and in information and communication technology. This information is used to set challenging attainment targets and has also informed pupil allocation to teaching groups. Common assessment points are planned through the year and assessment outcomes will be reviewed against individual pupil targets. The first assessment conducted in summer 2006 showed just over half the pupils have met their attainment targets and are making the expected progress in English and science, but only a third did so in mathematics. Whilst the school has established a baseline to set attainment targets and to judge pupils' progress over time it is not formally analysing or recording where pupils are struggling. Results from the first assessment show that there is more for the school to do to ensure that this information is captured on pupils' individual education plans and is used by teachers more precisely to plan learning programmes to better meet the needs of individual pupils.

The quality and rigour of procedures for management and governance of the school are improving. Governors are taking an active role in the school and their expertise in curriculum, health and finance is better used to support developments. Improvements made to some curriculum facilities have reduced the budget surplus and draft plans produced in the last few weeks demonstrate sound progress towards reducing it to an acceptable level and improving resource management. Governors are better informed and are beginning to establish procedures to monitor the impact of some of their decisions: for example they are receiving regular reports to monitor the impact of their investment in a synthetic phonics programme on pupils' progress and attainment.

Recommendations from the last inspection are integrated into school improvement plans and actions to tackle them to raise standards are at an early stage of implementation.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools