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14 December 2006

Dear Mr Carney and Mr O'Neill

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WHOSE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS HAS BEEN JUDGED SATISFACTORY

Thank you for the help, which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on the 13 December 2006. I appreciated the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils who you kindly arranged for me to meet.

As a result of the inspection on 21 and 22 September 2005, the school was asked to: raise standards across the school, especially for the higher attainers in writing and investigative science; track pupils' progress more rigorously so that any underachievement can be spotted and easily remedied; analyse the school's performance thoroughly and then use this information to decide priorities when drawing up the strategic plan.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

- Raise standards across the school, especially for the higher attainers in writing and investigative science.

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. The 2005 national test results demonstrated that standards improved since 2004 and were significantly above average by the time pupils left in Year 6. Standards reached by the higher attaining pupils in 2005 were also significantly above average in mathematics and science, and above average in English, but not significantly so. The 2006 test results showed that standards have been maintained in English and have risen significantly in science and mathematics especially for the higher attaining pupils.

The school has conducted a thorough audit of how science is taught and how writing is promoted across the curriculum. The school successfully introduced a more investigational and practical approach to the teaching of science and ensured all pupils know how to improve their writing. Indeed targets for improvement are set for both writing and science

and these are known and understood by the pupils. These initiatives have had a positive impact on standards reached, most noticeably in science. The school has correctly identified the next steps that are required to improve writing still further.

- Track pupils' progress more rigorously so that underachievement can be spotted early and remedied.

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. Working positively with the School Improvement Partner (SIP) and with support from the governing body, the school is developing a robust system for tracking pupils' progress through school. This enabled the school to begin to rigorously monitor cohorts, groups and individual pupils at key intervals throughout the year. It highlighted, for example, the need for pupils in Key Stage 1 to have further support in literacy and numeracy. The school was quick to ensure that appropriate strategies were initiated and understood by staff and pupils and already there has been a positive impact in terms of pupils' confidence and ability. The school has recognised that to improve this tracking system still further they need to harness the benefit of information and communication technology (ICT). The school is now working on how best to use assessment information in a common format that is both accessible and useful to all staff.

- Analyse the school's performance thoroughly and using the information to decide priorities when developing the strategic plan.

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue. Following the previous inspection the school leaders conducted a rigorous audit of practice and provision across the school. They developed specific plans to address the issues identified in the report. With the active support of the SIP and in strong partnership with the now very effective governing body, they have developed, trialled and implemented a Self Evaluation Planner (SEP). The development of the SEP involved all staff as well as senior leaders. It provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, reflecting exacting monitoring and analysis procedures. Lessons are observed, assessments moderated and pupils' progress against targets rigorously monitored by leaders and managers at all levels. Actions taken by the school have led to beneficial impact and progress is evident in all aspects of school development including some where it may be hard to achieve success in a short period of time.

The school has successfully recognised the good progress it has made since the last inspection and has correctly identified the priorities for future development. Consequently, the school is in a good position to make further improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Jim Alexander
Additional Inspector