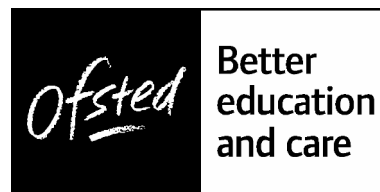


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13 December 2006

Mrs J Jackson  
Ladysmith Junior School  
Pretoria Road  
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Devon EX1 2PT

Dear Mrs Jackson

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Margaret Dickinson HMI, Janet Brennan HMI and I visited your school on Tuesday 5 December 2006, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during our visit.

As a result of the inspection on 17 and 18 May 2006, the school was asked to address four areas for development: improve pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics, so that they make more rapid progress through the school; remedy the weaknesses in teaching in all year groups to ensure it challenges pupils and builds on their prior attainment; improve the use of assessment information to monitor pupils' academic progress through analysing individual learning needs, setting targets and ensuring that planning better matches pupils' individual needs; improve marking so that pupils know how to improve their work.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that, at this time, the school is making satisfactory progress in all areas for development. This has become more rapid since September as the school's systems for monitoring and for pupil assessment have become more securely embedded in practice.

The school staff recognise that the judgements of the May 2006 inspection have enabled them to take stock and move forward to the next stage of development. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and gives strong leadership to her staff. She knows the school well and is accurate in her judgements of its effectiveness. The senior leadership team share her drive to improve standards and are taking an increasingly proactive role in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress.

Standards in English and mathematics are rising. The school met its 2006 Key Stage 2 targets for achievement at the expected level in English, but it was just below its target in mathematics. However, the target for higher achieving pupils was reached in both subjects. The school has evidence that the

upward trend in standards should be maintained in 2007. In most year groups, pupils are now making good progress and this is beginning to have an impact on the legacy of underachievement which is particularly apparent for older pupils.

Teaching has improved since the inspection, although inconsistencies remain. The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous. Senior staff have conducted lesson observations and the accuracy of their judgements has been confirmed by the local authority's own monitoring. Examples of good and outstanding practice are beginning to be shared throughout the school. In these classes pupils are now making good progress. They are actively engaged in, and enjoy, their learning. Where weaknesses remain appropriate action is being taken to support improvements. The quality of the lessons is also reflected in the quality of assessment and target setting. The good and outstanding lessons are underpinned by good knowledge of pupils' needs and teachers' strong awareness of what pupils need to do to improve. Conversely, the inadequate teaching takes too little account of pupils' previous learning and any assessments made.

Marking has improved, although there remain some inconsistencies in practice. Where it is good, the use of specific targets to focus pupils' attention on what needs to improve is proving effective in the drive to raise standards, particularly when this is linked to the pupils assessing their own work or that of a partner.

There have been strong moves towards ensuring a much more consistent approach to whole school practice in assessment and much of this has been successful. However, the degree to which assessment is actively used to influence lesson planning continues to be uneven. The school now has a clear picture of pupils' overall progress and which pupils need to be targeted for intervention and additional support.

The local authority is providing good support to the school. Its statement of action is clear and recognises the existing strengths of the school whilst outlining appropriate strategies for areas which require development. The authority has confidence in the ability of the headteacher to take the school forward. The process by which the school is supported but also challenged is effective due to the objective monitoring of an unattached adviser.

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

Yours sincerely

Pauline Robins  
Her Majesty's Inspector