



Mrs Linda Parker
Consultant Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Parker

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 10 January 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the school council for giving up their time to talk to me and also to the group who shared the excellent chocolate cake they had made with me.

As a result of the inspection in June 2006, the school was asked to: improve attendance; set and monitor clear, rigorous and measurable learning targets; and ensure that teaching is routinely good.

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

When the school was inspected it had experienced a prolonged period of considerable turbulence. A consultant headteacher took up post in September 2006 and the school is now on a more even footing. The headteacher is addressing longstanding embedded barriers to improvement with determination. Following a substantial period when this was not possible, pupils are attending full time and new pupils are being admitted. In addition, one pupil has been fully reintegrated into mainstream education while a further five are pursuing a staged reintegration programme. The school has conducted a review of the curriculum and as a result new groupings, courses and therapeutic opportunities are being introduced from January 2007 better to meet pupils' needs. These include boxing therapy, digital filming, the I-CAN group, massage, gardening club and use of the new fitness room. A revised timetable seeks to accommodate these broader therapeutic elements, to improve continuity of provision for pupils and to increase opportunities to develop basic literacy skills. Of concern is the current lack of systematic

provision for learning English, although the school has suitable plans to deal with this in the near future.

Good progress has been made in improving attendance. The overall rate of attendance for the autumn term 2006 was 80.4%. Of the 42 pupils on roll seven had 100% attendance, a further eight achieved at least 95% attendance and another seven attended for a minimum of 90% of the sessions. As a consequence of improved liaison with the educational welfare service, work with families has increased and several cases are moving towards prosecution. A more efficient system for contacting parents on the first day of a pupil's absence has been introduced and is resulting in positive responses. Points for good attendance form part of the school's comprehensive reward system, about which pupils are very enthusiastic. Medals, prizes and praise in assemblies are proving effective incentives for many pupils. In addition, more systematic induction arrangements for new pupils are helping them to settle into the school quickly and supporting their attendance. One new pupil spoke warmly of the way in which the school had responded to his needs in constructing a motivating, individual curriculum.

Progress in setting and monitoring rigorous, measurable learning targets is satisfactory. The setting of literacy and numeracy curriculum targets for primary-aged pupils is established. Sensibly, the school is building on this alongside its embedded practice of tracking of pupils' application to work and behaviour lesson by lesson. Curriculum targets for literacy and numeracy have been added to pupils' individual behaviour targets and together these are being given a high profile in class bases. In addition, the school has introduced a rolling programme of summative reviews of one pupil each day, enabling a regular and detailed check to be kept on all aspects of pupils' progress. However, at this early stage of development, the curriculum targets are not fully linked to this review process.

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often good. The school, well supported by the local authority, has identified where improvements in teaching are required and is taking suitable steps to bring these about. Pupils enjoy learning through practical subjects such as art, food and design technology and physical education. They also respond well to practical experiences in other subjects. For instance, in a French conversation lesson on ordering in a café, learning was enhanced by making and eating chocolate croissants. Lessons observed had clear learning objectives that were reviewed effectively at the end of lessons. In an art lesson, the use of a subject-specific vocabulary board helped pupils to describe the basic elements of the work of the artist they were studying and articulate what they had learned. Support for pupils was well gauged, enabling those who could to work independently while helping pupils requiring more assistance to make progress. Teachers are skilled at identifying and praising pupils' small successes in learning.

The local authority, through a number of its services including human resources and finance, is providing a wide range of good quality support for the school. Sharply focused, regular checks on progress with the areas for improvement form part of a broad spectrum of support and monitoring that is helping the school to innovate and improve its provision. Services, such as education welfare, are tailoring their work more closely to the school's particular needs. Additionally, the local authority is brokering liaison and support from local secondary schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Austin
Her Majesty's Inspector