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Mr G Leend
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Leend

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 Tuesday February 13, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 22 and 23 June 2006, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6
- improve teaching in Years 3 to 6 so that work is better matched to pupils' abilities, by better use of assessment information and ensure pupils have a better understanding of their own learning needs
- strengthen leadership and management and self-evaluation processes.

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.

Improving pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6

There is good improvement in pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6. The school is successfully boosting pupils' progress by making precise use of assessment information to help set clear targets for pupils. Increased precision in using assessment information means that targets set for pupils are much more closely aligned to their needs than previously. Older pupils spoken to showed enthusiasm for reaching the next steps within their learning targets. Teachers

rightly identify the need to seek to improve the clarity of these targets continually to help maintain the current momentum of improvement. The school has also taken very positive steps to involve parents in discussion about their children's targets. Parents are very pleased with the new systems and procedures and say that they feel much more involved in the process of accelerating their children's progress.

The school's tracking system shows that there has been a clear shift in improving pupils' performance since the school was inspected in June last year. The information shows pupils have been making sound and, in some cases, good progress since the start of the academic year. Work samples seen verify this is the case and also show that pupils have covered a wide range of work during the time. The school recognises that there remains work to be done to ensure that all pupils catch up on any previous gaps in progress.

Improving teaching in Years 3 to 6

Good progress has been made to improve teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6. Lessons seen, well organised work in pupils' books, and sound to good progress shown by the school's performance tracking information are clear signs that better teaching is now in evidence for Years 3 to 6. This area of improvement has much to do with the school's improved systems for assessing pupils' progress. Systems have been clarified to make the information more easily accessible. The information is presented clearly and regularly analysed by teachers to help them identify where increased support is required or adjustments in lesson planning are needed. As a result, in lessons, work is much more closely tailored to pupils' needs. The use of 'Boast Books' is a good system to help teachers gain a rapid snapshot of pupils' ongoing progress. Also, marking is now of good quality and often includes extensive comments to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how they can improve. There is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons which results from the increased emphasis teachers now place on ensuring objectives for the work are very clearly understood by pupils. Occasionally, in whole class teaching sessions, higher attaining pupils do not progress as fast as they could do. The school is rightly aware of the need to ensure that this group of pupils is consistently challenged in all activities throughout Years 3 to 6 as a crucial part of the work to drive up standards and achievement.

Good strategies have been introduced to accelerate the progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities even more. For instance, these pupils are sometimes provided with extra booster sessions to prepare them for the forthcoming work in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers say that this is beneficial in helping these individuals 'tune in' much more rapidly to the work presented.

Strengthening leadership and management and self-evaluation processes

Good progress has been made in these areas. The school has implemented clear action plans to support development in all of the key areas for improvement identified in its last inspection – for example, upgrading the roles of the subject coordinators so that they are in a stronger position to help teachers improve pupils' achievement and raise standards. The school has rightly shifted its focus more heavily towards analysing the achievement and progress of individual pupils. Leadership and management are now drilling deeply into ensuring that all staff make the best use of performance data to drive improvements in pupils' achievement. This is working and the headteacher and senior management team are pressing hard to keep this improvement going. The recent appointment of upper and lower Key Stage 2 coordinators is doing much to strengthen the support available to teachers and to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6.

Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the essential ingredients required to move things forward at a good rate. They are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating developments.

The school has received good quality support from the local authority, especially in working to clarify and define the objectives within its development planning. All of the work carried out by the leadership and management in recent times, especially the fine tuning of assessment systems, has resulted in a much sharper focus within the school upon critically evaluating its own performance. Self-evaluation processes now engage all of the staff and governors and ensure that there is full ownership of plans for future development. The strong commitment and enthusiasm of the staff, the clear action plans, and the improved stability in staffing indicate good capacity for future improvement to help the school overcome the remaining legacy of underachievement amongst the pupils in Years 3 to 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin
Additional Inspector