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Mrs J Long
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20 February 2007

Dear Mrs Long

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 1 February 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Also, please thank the chair of governors for giving up his time to come and discuss the school with me.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 July 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6
- improve standards of teaching and teachers' knowledge of how to teach mathematics
- ensure that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that challenges all pupils.

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.

Attention has been given to every aspect of raising standards across the school and particularly in Years 2 and 6. The headteacher has successfully involved staff in analysing all the available data, including the results of the 2006 tests, in order to identify exactly where pupils can do better. With good support from the local authority, staff have set appropriate group targets which show that they have high expectations for all pupils. Parents and pupils have been made aware of these targets and this is successfully focusing everyone's attention on what needs to be achieved. The work in pupils' books and in the lessons seen demonstrates that pupils are making steady progress from their starting points. Teachers and pupils clearly have higher

expectations than at the time of the last inspection. Marking is more focused and is beginning to help pupils to understand exactly how to improve their work. However, sometimes the words used in the comments are too difficult for the age group concerned to fully understand.

Resources have improved, particularly for teaching reading, and the school is already adapting to the new Primary Strategy. The detailed monitoring by senior staff is assisting staff to improve their teaching. Lessons are well paced and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding more quickly. Deployment of staff has been carefully considered and good use is being made of the highly skilled teaching assistants. This ensures all pupils are well supported in lessons. There have been some unavoidable staff changes in Year 2. The school is working hard to secure continuity for the rest of the year to avoid this having a negative impact.

The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly and teachers are more secure in their subject knowledge. There is good monitoring of the content of plans by senior staff to ensure the work is matched to all pupils' needs. Strong support from the local authority's specialist adviser and the subject coordinator is also having a positive impact. Pupils' work in both the lessons seen and in books shows steady progress. Their rate of progress is faster from Year 4 onwards. All teachers confidently use the interactive whiteboards to make mathematics lessons clear and interesting. Some good examples of teachers questioning pupils to check their level of understanding were observed. However, occasionally teachers do not sufficiently reinforce the key facts being taught in a way that all learners can understand. Some further refinements in marking for younger pupils are required to ensure they know what they should do in order to improve. Higher attaining pupils are now challenged to learn more but this could, in some instances, be done more creatively.

Assessment procedures have been rationalised and staff now understand more clearly how to use the information from them to help plan the next steps of learning. Pupils are increasingly being involved in self assessment. They are able to identify when they have succeeded and, consequently, their self esteem and desire to learn more are improving. Reviews of the progress made by individuals and groups are having a positive impact on learning. Pupils are beginning to understand what helps them learn best, although some girls still need further help to think this through. Leadership in the school is strong. Senior staff and the governors are ensuring all issues identified in the last inspection are being dealt with thoroughly. This bodes well for longer term improvement.

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

Yours sincerely



Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector