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27 March 2007

Mrs J Smail
The Headteacher
Somerford Nursery and Primary Community School
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Dear Mrs Smail

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 March 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 your staff and pupils and, in particular, to the people with whom I had meetings, the senior leadership team, the subject coordinators, the members of the school council and the representative from the local authority.

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 1 and 2 February 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science and improve the pupils' achievement by making better use of assessment
- develop the role of the subject coordinators
- improve attendance by developing pupils' and parents' awareness of the importance of attending school every day.

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.

The national tests in 2006 show standards are improving, as is the pupils' achievement when measured against their low starting points. In Year 6, standards in English rose significantly and are now broadly in line with the national average. Although standards improved slightly in mathematics they remain well below those expected, particularly at the higher levels. Standards in science improved slightly and are now broadly average.

In Year 2, standards improved significantly in all subjects, although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is below the national average, especially in mathematics. The school recognises that it has still some way to go to raise standards further in all year groups, particularly at the higher levels.

The school, supported appropriately by the local authority consultants, implemented a range of successful strategies last year to raise standards in English. Most notably, daily workshops were introduced to tackle pupils' specific areas of weakness and these proved to be most effective. Quite rightly, the school is now concentrating its efforts on improving standards in mathematics and similar initiatives are in place.

In my brief observations of parts of the workshops in both English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, a number of strengths were in evidence. The relationships between the adults and pupils were good, resulting in positive attitudes to learning. The sessions were planned carefully to capture the pupils' interest and the activities matched their needs. Pupils worked well, both independently and in groups, and made good progress in the short time allowed to complete tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties were supported in a sensitive manner. Without exception, all classrooms visited had a range of visual displays to support the pupils' learning and information and communication technology was used effectively by the pupils.

Assessment procedures are good in English and developing well in mathematics. Marking in both subjects is encouraging and constructive, helping pupils to take the next steps in their learning. The school has sensible systems in place to track the pupils' progress against targets set. It is monitoring their performance diligently and starting to analyse data in a more rigorous way to raise standards. Internal assessments show that Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their expected targets for English and mathematics in the national tests. However, this is not the case in Year 2 due to a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this particular year group. Good intervention strategies are in place to support these pupils.

Subject coordination is improving and leaders are working well in the newly established teams. All are committed and enthusiastic and they receive good support from the senior team. Plans for improvement are thorough and all the coordinators understand the importance of rigorous monitoring and evaluation. At present, this is more developed in English and mathematics and, with the senior team, these subject leaders are beginning to evaluate the impact of improvement plans on raising standards and achievement. The senior management team is aware that challenging pupils to achieve high standards must remain the top priority for the school.

The school has implemented a range of appropriate strategies to improve attendance, although this still remains well below the national average. That

said it has had some success with reducing authorised absence this year. Senior leaders are working hard to ensure parents understand the importance of daily attendance and robust monitoring systems are in place. I note the school has been without an education welfare officer for several months during this academic year.

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

Yours sincerely



Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector