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Mr M Cowpland
The Headteacher
Boston Staniland Primary School
Peck Avenue
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Dear Mr Cowpland

Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 June, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 February 2006, the school was asked to increase the good and better teaching to improve how pupils learn, achieve and behave; improve standards, resources and provision in information and communication technology (ICT); make best use of assessment information to track pupils' achievement and improve pupils' attendance.

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 and in raising the pupils' achievements.

The school's detailed action plan identifies relevant priorities to improve teaching and learning. The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school and a good understanding of its strengths and area for development. He acknowledges the need for greater consistency of approach between teachers. Appropriate decisions have been taken to allocate strong teachers to classes where improvement is most needed.

The teaching observed during this visit matched the headteacher's evaluation and is satisfactory overall with just over half of good quality. Pupils were generally enthusiastic in lessons, although a small number in some classes did not contribute to class discussion and lost concentration, not listening carefully enough. Relationships were mostly good. In the better lessons, teachers used interactive white boards, displays and learning partners effectively to develop pupils' understanding of what they had to do. Pupils worked best where they were encouraged to think about what they were doing and to make decisions.

The school's assessment data shows that Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2007 are likely to improve on the standards achieved in 2006, which were below the national average. However, this improvement is not enough to reach the school's targets. Although the data show that pupils in some classes are making rapid progress, overall, progress is satisfactory.

The systems for assessing pupils have been fundamentally changed in the last year. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and their progress is reviewed against their targets. Teachers and subject leaders analyse areas of weakness for individual pupils and groups. This information is increasingly used to prioritise skills and adjust lesson planning. Teachers are aware of the need to focus on areas where pupils are less confident or their understanding is weakest.

The school has adopted the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), using 'must, should, could' targets in lessons to aid learning. In the best practice, these are already helping to increase pupils' rates of progress and provide a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve further. Lead teachers are also engaged in developing ways in which pupils can be more involved in assessing their own work and identifying targets as part of a local initiative. However, although the system is now consistent across classes, teachers' confidence in using the assessment information still varies.

There have been significant changes in the approach to ICT. There is now a strong emphasis on using it in classrooms in a range of subjects. Equipment has been improved and access is much better. Pupils say that they use ICT regularly. They demonstrated familiarity with a number of programs and applications. They said that they enjoyed using ICT. However, their skills and knowledge are still developing as a consequence of limited provision in the past. They are not yet at the stage where they can make independent choices on how best to use ICT to improve their work. Systems for assessing pupils' progress in ICT are not yet established.

The school acknowledges the importance of improving attendance. New systems are in place. Parents are contacted on the first day of absence, though some do not respond to these calls. There is close and regular liaison with the local authority on selected cases. Patterns of absence are analysed and legitimate reasons for absence made clear. Punctuality is also monitored. As a result, attendance improved in the first four terms this year to be close to the school's target. However, holidays taken in term time since Easter have recently undermined this improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg
Her Majesty's Inspector