

12 June 2007

Miss Stephanie Grimshaw
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Grimshaw

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 11 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit. I am also grateful to the chair of governors and the local authority for assistance with this 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 in November 2006, the school was asked to:

- improve progress, especially in Years 3 to 6;
- improve teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6;
- encourage achievement by target setting;
- check progress rigorously;
- improve quality assurance across the school;
- improve attendance.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress.

The school is a harmonious community. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils always try their best and they are keen to do well.

The national test results for pupils at present in Year 6 are likely to be similar to those in 2006. In the past, substantial gains have been made during Year 6; this remains the case.

Provision for literacy in Key Stage 2 is now at least satisfactory and often good. Several lessons had a brisk pace and achieved their objectives well.

Occasionally there are missed opportunities, for example, to focus on the link between spelling and pronunciation, or to correct routine errors in the work of the more able pupils. For half an hour each morning, pupils in Years 1 to 6 are in small 'focus groups' that concentrate on aspects of literacy. The two dozen groups are staffed by teachers or teaching assistants. This is a helpful opportunity; work is tailored well to pupils' needs. However, the pace and challenge in these small groups are variable. This should be monitored to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities over the course of each term. Improved literacy lessons and the provision in focus groups are promoting better achievement in literacy throughout Key Stage 2.

Numeracy in Key Stage 2 is generally satisfactory. Good progress was seen in some lessons. Elsewhere, more structure was needed to enable weaker pupils to master key steps, or the more able pupils were not challenged sufficiently. Numeracy work in books is fairly mundane. The menu in mathematics is not as exciting as it might be.

Eleven numeracy or literacy lessons were visited; a few others were seen briefly. No lessons were unsatisfactory and more than half were good. Together with work in books, this suggests that teaching and learning are better than at the time of the last inspection. However, in a few lessons, pupils were allowed to take too long over personal organisation, resulting in loss of productivity. Brief observation of work in Reception and Key Stage 1 showed sound progress.

For a large proportion of pupils, English is not the language of the home. Some pupils are able to show their capacity for learning more clearly in mathematics than in English. Where pupils' mathematics is significantly stronger than their English, the possibility of underachievement in English should be explored.

There have been improvements in assessment and target setting. Pupils' progress is checked more reliably than in the past. However, despite these procedures, opportunities to sort out weaknesses in pupils' work day-by-day are sometimes missed, for example, consistency in the tense of verbs and the use of 'a' and 'an'. Sometimes teachers do not identify the small steps that weaker pupils need to carry out tasks - for example, spelling patterns to find words that rhyme with 'four', and how to decide where gluing tabs are needed in making a pyramid from a sheet of cardboard. Assessment for learning needs more refinement.

The attendance record for the school has improved considerably.

Classroom environments and teaching are being monitored systematically. Senior staff have given much effort to evaluating the quality of the school's work and moving it forward. They have been well supported by the local authority. The temporary appointment of an acting deputy headteacher has

been productive in developing improved practice, particularly with literacy and assessment. Governors have given every support and encouragement to recent action for improvement. The end of the current term will bring in some staffing changes. The year group teams work together effectively and there is good quality support from teaching assistants, particularly with focus groups. The school is putting in hand tighter curricular coordination. The school and local authority are aware that remaining staffing uncertainties need to be resolved as a matter of urgency. The school is well placed to make significant improvement in achievement from next September.

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

Yours sincerely



Jim Bennetts
Her Majesty's Inspector