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Miss P Rogers
The Headteacher
Hasbury C of E Primary School
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West Midlands B63 4QD

Dear Miss Rogers

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 October 2007, 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 11 and 12 January 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English, particularly for boys
- improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that lessons are planned to take into account the different abilities in the class
- ensure that the headteacher and other leaders give teachers clear judgements about the quality of their teaching and how it could be better.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

You took up post as headteacher on the 1 September 2007. In the short time since joining the school you have undertaken a range of initiatives to improve the quality of education. You have monitored the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons, checking teachers' planning and some scrutiny of pupils work. In particular, you have made strenuous efforts to improve the learning environment for the pupils through an intense focus on improving display and a reassessment of the suitability and use of resources. There is a distinct sense of urgency with high expectations being made clear to staff and pupils, including a policy of what is expected in each classroom. As a result, most classroom displays are fresh and include curriculum targets which are used by the pupils as a learning resource.

Improved planning and teaching have led to pupils making better progress and standards are rising accordingly. There is evidence that this better picture is beginning to enable pupils to make up for lost ground. Even though standards in English have risen, including those for boys, they remain well below average, especially in writing because pupils' skills are uneven and there are gaps in their knowledge. The school feels confident that things will continue to improve. However, there is still a steep hill to climb if the pupils are to achieve their targets.

The quality of teaching has improved because the leadership team have rightly focused on helping staff improve the quality of their planning and lesson activities. As a result, teachers' confidence in creating and teaching effective lessons has increased. In particular, planning for different abilities has improved with a greater emphasis on involving pupils in assessing their own learning. All lessons seen had a learning objective, although these varied in their precision. The most successful lessons had a good pace, with success criteria well used to explain to pupils what they needed to achieve. However, in some lessons and the work seen in books indicate this is still too variable, particularly for the highest attaining pupils who do not consistently receive sufficiently challenging work. Poor presentation and inconsistent implementation of the marking policy in some classes detract from the improved quality of teaching and learning observed during the visit.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving accuracy and quality of monitoring. Assessment systems have been developed and a tracking systems assists appropriate analysis. The school now has a useful school improvement plan for evaluating the impact of actions taken to address the issues highlighted in its previous inspection report.

The senior leadership team have received effective support from the local authority in enabling them to give clear unambiguous judgements on the quality of teaching. Teachers receive written evaluations of strengths in their teaching and are given good support by the school and the local authority to address any areas for development. Staff have been receptive to a range of recently introduced strategies, responding well to the increased level of challenge. They now understand the extent to which they are accountable for ensuring that pupils in their class make good progress. The school's record of these checks on teaching indicate that its challenging target for all of the teaching to be at least satisfactory, with 70% to be good or better, is yet to be met. This is because many of the strategies put in place, designed to bring about the necessary improvements, need more time to fully embed. Teaching assistants have benefited from effective training, and now understand the key role that they play in supporting pupils' learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector