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Mrs N Jones  
The Headteacher  
St Andrew's Benn CofE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School  
Chester Street  
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Warwickshire  
CV21 3NX

Dear Mrs Jones

Ofsted Monitoring of Schools with Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you, your staff, pupils and chair of governors gave when I inspected your school on 26 June 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 15 and 16 November 2006, the school was asked to:

- develop the school's monitoring procedures to ensure more consistent guidance and support for teachers on how to make effective use of assessment information when planning work so that it has a positive impact on pupils' progress
- ensure that planning and teaching in science at Key Stage 2 provide a clear structure which helps pupils to build on previous learning without repeating work
- provide more challenging work for above-average pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 2.

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.

Progress was slow initially but the pace has accelerated over the last few months. This is partly due to the new headteacher making sure that key staff in the school have priority time to work, with support, on their monitoring and development roles. The recently introduced cycle of monitoring is good. It includes the collection of a range of assessment information and lesson observations by different staff, as well as more focused roles for governors. Monitoring is providing a good basis from which

to evaluate the effectiveness of provision. Staff are becoming more familiar with the success criteria set out and actions are more frequently evaluated by looking at the progress pupils are making.

The school has focused on making sure assessment informs planning more effectively in English and mathematics. Across the school more consistent planning caters for three different levels of ability in classes. Although pupils are able to make better progress because they are being given work that is planned to meet their needs more accurately, this is still not reliable in all classes. Only in the best lessons did the planning translate into good challenge for pupils with a variety of needs, including those of high ability, those who are at an early stage of learning English, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).

Progress in science has been limited until recently. The coordinator for science has, with support, planned a suitable overview of when different aspects of science are to be taught across the school. This is underpinned by suitable guidance about the knowledge and skills expected at different levels and ages. An assessment system has been implemented and is being used consistently. The coordinator has not analysed assessment information and, therefore, has not identified the next priorities. The school has limited knowledge of the progress made by pupils in science.

The coordinator and headteacher have begun drafting more detailed plans. These have good, clear links made between what is being taught and what children should learn as a result. Teachers are developing their understanding of scientific skills. Although there is still variation, opportunities to build upon prior learning are more evident across the age groups. Support from the local authority (LA) has increased the school's ability to offer practical investigative science. Pupils report that they are having more opportunities for this type of work and that they find it fun and interesting. During observations of science across the school, pupils were motivated and rising to the challenge of practical work. Where pupils understood the purpose of the task they were able to organise themselves and take on responsibility for their learning. This was not evident for all pupils. Sometimes teachers' explanations were too long, restricting time for pupils to plan and solve problems for themselves. Good practice was observed in the Reception class, where children were encouraged to offer their suggestions about what might happen in an experiment prior to trying it out. This skill was less evident at a higher level in some lower Key Stage 2 classes.

There has been satisfactory improvement in the levels of mathematics work provided for pupils. More lessons are providing challenge for those with higher ability and addressing the specific additional needs of some pupils, but this is still inconsistent. In some classes work was well matched because of good assessment of the previous day's learning. In some other lessons too much time was adult led and not enough pupils were actively involved. Sometimes tasks were not well thought out and as a result the task took over from the learning.

The subject leader for mathematics has successfully brought together data analysis with other monitoring information and has clearly prioritised the next areas for development. She has recently identified the most able pupils in each year group so that staff are aware of who needs additional challenge. Through careful analysis, she has also identified that, although mathematics targets have addressed pupils' short term progress, knowledge and skills are not revisited often enough to ensure learning is fully secure.

The external support from the LA has been satisfactory. The support has had limited impact overall. It has been rather disjointed because connections between the different contributors have not been explicit. Staff from the school have not been sufficiently involved in shaping and applying this support. A recent LA review has provided a good baseline from which the LA can operate. There is recognition of the need for a more cohesive approach that builds upon the clarity the headteacher has established and that uses and develops the skills of staff within the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson  
Her Majesty's Inspector