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27 June 2007

Mrs K Whitehead
Headteacher
Exton C of E Primary School
Garden Road
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Dear Mrs Whitehead

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 26 June 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 the pupils, the chair of governors and representative of the local authority with whom I met and spoke during the day.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 27 and 28 November 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and how well pupils achieve by the end of Year 6
- improve the quality of teaching for the older pupils by ensuring work is matched to and challenges pupils of all abilities
- ensure assessment information is used rigorously to track pupils' progress and that pupils play an active part in setting and reviewing their own targets
- further develop the role that teachers and governors play in monitoring the work and performance of the school.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievements. The school has responded positively to the findings of the last inspection. It has pursued improvement on all fronts and this is having a good impact in improving pupils' learning and enabling them to make better progress.

Standards are improving throughout the school. Better teaching coupled with careful assessment, improved analysis and targeted support is having a good impact. Provisional outcomes for Year 2 show that standards continue to be exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils have made good progress from their starting points. By Year 6, teacher assessments show a good improvement in all subjects compared with the previous year. Standards in mathematics and science are now above those found nationally with those of English broadly in line. Increased numbers of pupils are achieving at the higher levels. Pupils have made improved rates of progress this year. However, pupils will not achieve as well as they should because of the previous legacy of poor teaching throughout Key Stage 2.

The leadership team has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning. The school's programme of lesson observations show an improving picture in the quality of teaching although there is still variation in the Year 5/6 class. Appropriate steps have been taken to resolve the situation.

In lessons observed during this visit, the quality of teaching was good overall. Most teachers planned interesting lessons with appropriate tasks prepared to meet the differing needs of pupils. Resources were carefully selected to stimulate and interest pupils. A good range of assessment for learning techniques was observed. These included a wide range of questioning, opportunities for pupils to talk with a partner and the chance to evaluate each others' work. However, in some lessons pupils were seated too long listening to the teacher or other pupils. In addition, the chance to extend the higher attaining pupils was sometimes missed. Pupils behaved well and they have good attitudes to their work.

Good improvements have been made to the systems for recording assessments of pupils' work, analysing pupils' strengths and weaknesses and tracking their progress. Systems are now rigorous, robust and consistently applied. Staff track pupils comprehensively and regular meetings are held to check pupils' progress. The outcomes are used to intervene swiftly with decisive action to address areas of need. This is helping to increase rates of progress. School assessment data indicates that more pupils are on track to meet age related targets by the end of the year.

There have been good improvements in monitoring the work and performance of the school. Staff and governors have participated in a range of activities which has increased their understanding of standards throughout the school. There is a detailed and suitable action plan with relevant strategies for improving teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. However, it is not clear who will check that the actions have been carried out successfully. The role of the governors in the plan is also not clarified and needs strengthening. In addition, the costs to implement the plan are not specific enough.

The school has been supported well by the local authority. In addition, the headteacher has benefited from good mentoring from a neighbouring headteacher. The school has worked well in partnership with other local schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector