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Ms L Connor
The Headteacher
Rodbourne Cheney Primary School
Broadway
Swindon
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Dear Ms Connor

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 17 September 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would like to thank the governors, the group of pupils from Year 6, and the school's school improvement partner for giving time to meet with me. Since the last inspection an acting deputy headteacher has been seconded to the school and a newly qualified teacher appointed.

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 23 and 24 January 2007, the school was asked to: improve achievement and standards, particularly in Key Stage 2; raise the quality of teaching and learning; use assessment and marking more effectively; and improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership across the school.

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

The results of the most recent National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 6 were significantly better in English, mathematics and science than in 2006. The school exceeded its targets in English and science, but not in mathematics even though results in this subject were much improved. The findings of this monitoring visit support the school's analysis that in mathematics pupils' skills in using and applying the four rules of number still show a legacy of underachievement. The school's tracking data shows that the majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 now make at least satisfactory progress.

In Year 2, standards in writing improved over 2006 but those in reading and mathematics fell back to the levels achieved in 2005. The headteacher and governors

recognise that the lack of consistency in teaching and in the use of assessment in Years 1 and 2 is an issue for further improvement.

The improvement in standards in Key Stage 2 is very much the result of the significant strength of the headteacher, governors and local authority working in effective partnership to secure improvement. The drive, vision and determination of the headteacher have been vital in empowering teachers to take on board their leadership and management responsibilities. There is a shared sense of purpose amongst leaders which is totally focused on school improvement. The commitment to providing high quality continuing professional development for all teachers and teaching assistants is paramount. From the start of this term, teaching assistants are using their recent training to lead intervention programmes to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which is a significant step forward from their previous roles.

Standards would not have improved without significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching in the school is now satisfactory, with an increasing proportion that is good. Teachers' planning is matched closely to the different learning needs of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Assessment and marking are much improved and teachers follow the school's policy. Targets are set for pupils in literacy and numeracy and these are displayed in classrooms and pupils' books. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do in order to improve their work. Some lesson introductions are still too long with pupils sitting on the carpet unnecessarily and not learning. Teaching assistants provide good and effective support for individuals and small groups in lessons. However, they are not consistently fully utilised in lesson introductions.

Year 6 pupils spoken to feel that the school is much better than it was six months ago. They appreciate the changes made to the school environment. They feel that the stricter approach to wearing school uniform is beneficial. Pupils say that learning is much more enjoyable and value the way that teachers adapt learning to meet their individual needs. As one said, 'I am a visual learner and it's great that my teacher understands this.' Pupils talk confidently about how much better teaching is and how they find marking of their work helpful in telling them how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

The headteacher, governors and local authority recognise, and this is supported by evidence from the visit, that the good progress made still needs to be embedded right across the school, especially in teaching and learning, in order for pupils' achievement to be consistently good.

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

Yours sincerely

David Curtis
Additional Inspector