

18 October 2007

Mrs J Dean
The Acting Headteacher
Norton Juxta Kempsey C of E First School
Wadborough Road
Littleworth
Worcester
WR5 2QJ

Dear Mrs Dean

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 10 October 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Your self-evaluation of progress is particularly helpful and identifies many of the school's areas for further improvement. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils who welcomed me into their school and were eager to talk about their work.

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 16 and 17 January 2007, the school was asked to:

- ensure that the leaders and managers monitor the work of the school more rigorously to bring about the improvements required to drive up achievement and standards
- raise expectations and improve the quality of teaching and learning, using assessment information to match the pupils' work more accurately to their capabilities, particularly in Years 1 and 2
- improve curriculum planning so that all pupils and particularly the more able are given work that provides them with greater challenge
- make sure all pupils understand how to improve their work.

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' achievement. The 2007 Year 2 assessments show an improvement since 2006. In reading, writing and mathematics nearly all pupils reached the level expected for their age and almost half did even better than this. A third of the Year 4 pupils who left the school in July this year made exceptional progress overall, although just under a half did not achieve as well as they could have. During their time in Year 3 most of the current Year 4 pupils made satisfactory progress in

reading, and well over half made good progress. Achievement in writing and mathematics was not as good with just under half the pupils making insufficient progress. The school is aware of this and has identified raising achievement in writing and numeracy as key priorities for improvement.

There is a systematic and coherent programme to monitor and evaluate the school's work, which is led well by you and supported satisfactorily by other subject leaders and managers. You ensure that the quality of teaching and learning and the pupils' progress is checked regularly. Teachers are given helpful feedback about their work and what they need to do to improve further, although the link between effective teaching and pupils' progress and achievement in lessons is not given enough priority. Whilst assessment information is beginning to be used to identify where pupils are doing well and when they are underachieving, the information is not always used to help teachers plan work that is consistently matched to the pupils' capabilities, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. Teachers work well as a team. Since the inspection in January they have undertaken many important initiatives which have led to some improvements, for example in moderating assessments and working collaboratively. Less progress has been made to improve the quality of lesson planning. Consequently, pupils with different abilities sometimes have work to do that is generally pitched at the same level of difficulty and the more able pupils are still not given work that is consistently challenging. This leads to lessons where pupils do not always make enough progress and learn new skills and knowledge at a sufficiently speedy rate. You recognise this and, following a useful trial of planning approaches carried out in Years 3 and 4, all staff are expected to implement an improved lesson planning system by the beginning of November 2007.

The local authority is providing a comprehensive programme of support which is satisfactory overall and good in some respects, for example in relation to improving the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

Clearly much hard work has been undertaken since January and your leadership has established a greater sense of rigour and purpose for the school's work. There is a clear sense of educational direction and a positive foundation for further improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters
Her Majesty's Inspector