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Mrs R Garratt
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Garratt

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.

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 20 and 21 February 2007, the school was asked to

- accelerate children's rate of progress by extending the same rigour with which standards in mathematics have been improved to other subjects, especially English and science
- ensure staff make better use of assessment data to keep a closer eye on how well all groups of children are performing so that support can be provided where it is most needed
- make sure learning activities match the needs of all children, particularly those for whom English is an additional language.

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 pupils' achievement.

The 2007 results at Key Stage 2 were lower than in 2006. Science and English results remain well below national averages. These low results were partly because a large number of low attaining pupils joined the school during Key Stage 2. In addition, there remains a significant legacy of underachievement associated with the school's previous failing school status. The school's tracking system and evidence seen during the visit indicate that most pupils are currently making at least satisfactory progress,

although there are year groups where a more rapid rate of improvement is needed to overcome previous significant underachievement.

Progress made improving English is more evident because this has been the priority during the period immediately following the section 5 inspection. The whole school approach to phonics, spelling and handwriting has become more established since the last inspection and this is resulting in improved outcomes. Practice observed during the visit indicated that in most lessons a rigorous approach is being taken to help pupils achieve their targets in English. Outstanding practice was observed in Year 5 where pupils are becoming very adept at peer and self assessment. The school has determined that achievement in science will be prioritised following the current developments in English. Generally, pupils are clear about their targets and value the attention the school gives to these. In some lessons the pace of learning was more variable because expectations were not always high enough and there were insufficient strategies to ensure pupils concentrated fully on their work. In a minority of lessons pupils are not actively involved and lose concentration as they are expected to listen for too long. These weaknesses need to be eradicated to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Subjects of the curriculum are not always being used to reinforce important skills. The school is addressing this issue through the improvements it is currently making to the teaching of science and further identifying opportunities to promote literacy and investigative skills in other subjects.

The school's senior leadership is now very clear about how to use data effectively, notably as a source of evidence to provide a more comprehensive view of the quality of teaching and learning and to identify accurately groups that are not making expected progress. However, a minority of staff fails to use this data to identify the improvements needed in provision.

Effective intervention strategies have been developed in English to ensure pupils falling behind catch up in most year groups. Additional support is often provided in advance so all pupils can be included in lessons without the need for remediation. Speaking and listening are now given a greater emphasis, with talk partners being used consistently well to promote language development. These improvements have increased the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The school's improved monitoring confirms the increased progress made by EAL pupils. The school is aware that White British boys and higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 need to achieve more.

Support provided by the local authority has been satisfactory. The local authority has helped remove uncertainties around the budget situation. Consultancy support has been provided in a timely manner. Although the local authority's reviews of progress have largely identified the correct issues they have not taken sufficient account of the outcomes the school is achieving.

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

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector