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21 November 2007

Mr A Dodds
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Dodds

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 13 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please convey my thanks to all staff, pupils and governors.

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 21 and 22 February 2007, the school was asked to:

- broaden the range of teaching and learning styles and ensure that more of the teaching and learning is good or better so that pupils make better progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6
- strengthen marking and assessment procedures so that they indicate to pupils how to improve their work and what they need to do to achieve a higher level of attainment
- ensure that initiatives to improve pupils' progress are thoroughly evaluated so that their impact can be better measured.

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 headteacher and governors have set an agenda for school improvement which is clearly effective. They have been well supported by other staff as they endeavour to improve the education of pupils. Unvalidated test results for 2007 show that pupils in Year 6 exceeded their targets, achieving the highest results in the schools' history. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen and are now significantly above average. This is because the progress pupils make has accelerated and is good overall. Assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that school is

well placed to improve further the rate of progress made by pupils and to maintain the high standards achieved.

There has been a marked improvement in teaching overall. The proportion that is good or better has increased since the inspection. The school has benefited from the advice of the local authority whilst making these improvements. A well constructed common planning format is used for all lessons which is underpinned by the objectives for learning and success criteria. Consequently, lessons are consistently well structured. Teachers are now much better at pitching work at the correct level for all pupils and this has accelerated the rate of progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science lessons. In other subjects the work is not always as well matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers make much better use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils make the expected progress. A range of extra activities have been very effective in increasing the rate of progress made by different groups of pupils.

The quality of the guidance given to pupils has improved. The school has embarked on an assessment for learning project. This has contributed to the improvements in teaching. Teachers are now more effective at planning lessons using assessment information. They use a broader range of teaching techniques to engage pupils in lessons. Pupils demonstrate a mature attitude to their learning. They report that they understand their targets for improvement and that they are well supported by teachers. Pupils are regularly involved in evaluating the progress they are making and talk knowledgeably about the steps they have to take to improve further. Marking in all subjects is conscientiously completed. However, the quality of it is inconsistent across different subjects. The best marking is in English lessons where teachers give pupils a good balance of praise and constructive criticism. In other subjects pupils do not find the marking as helpful.

Assessment information is being better used to give pupils extra support when they need it. Teachers in English, mathematics and science have been very effective in checking that the extra activities offered result in the desired acceleration in progress. This information is being used very well to tailor activities to the specific needs of individual pupils. Subject departments are consistently using assessment information to check the progress being made by pupils. School leaders are regularly checking the quality of teaching, but they have not yet focused sufficiently on the progress being made by pupils in lessons. Staff are now well placed to ensure pupils make better progress from entry to the school because of improved transition arrangements between Year 4 and Year 5.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector