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24 January 2008

The Headteacher
Granby Junior School
Heanor Road
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Dear Mr Allsopp,

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 23 January 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 25-26 April 2007, the school was asked to improve leadership and management systems for monitoring and evaluating to bring about whole-school improvement; the knowledge and skills of the governors to enable them to challenge the school and hold it to account; raise standards in English particularly boys' achievement in writing; and make assessment more effective so that teaching and the targets set for pupils are challenging enough.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress.

Since the last inspection the school has put in place a timetable for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning which clearly outlines what is to be checked and by whom. However, although the timetable states when monitoring will take place it does not highlight the possibility of increasing the frequency of monitoring if needed. Members of the senior leadership team (SLT) have conducted lesson observations and scrutinised children's work, at times with support from the local authority (LA). The SLT has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. When lesson observations have taken place the written feedback given to teachers lacks robustness, and identified weaknesses are not clearly followed up in subsequent monitoring visits. Furthermore teachers are not clearly told the overall judgement made about the quality of a lesson or the evaluation of how much progress children made.

Monitoring of teaching, and findings of this visit, highlight inconsistencies in how effectively teaching carries out agreed ways of working. These inconsistencies have not been dealt with because monitoring has not been sufficiently focused or robust.

Whole-school improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have been restricted because inconsistencies remain.

Following the last inspection governors have reorganised their committee structure which now allows a more focused agenda on standards, teaching and learning as well as other areas for development. The newly formed committees have not been in place long and their remits have not yet been established. When governors' meetings take place it is reported that more discussion and debate takes place compared to previous agendas where information was passively received from the headteacher. More recently there has been a low turnout at governor's meetings. Governors have begun to visit the school to see first hand how the school is improving. There have only been a very small number of visits and they do not always relate to the areas for improvement given at the last inspection.

Standards in English as measured by the Year 6 tests fell slightly in 2007. Taking into consideration children's starting points the amount of progress they had made in English improved when compared to the previous year. School targets for writing and level 5 for English, including those set as success criteria in the LA's action plan to support the school, were not met in 2007. However, the school target for English at level 4 and above was exceeded. Assessments of children's progress in English indicate that standards are improving including the standards boys achieve in writing.

The school has improved the way it tracks the progress that children make in reading, writing and mathematics. Tracking is more accurate in writing and weakest in mathematics. All children have targets in English. Many children were able to explain these targets and what they had to do to achieve them but this was not always the case. The school has effectively used the information on children's progress to deploy teaching assistants and to identify children who should benefit from small group work.

The LA has provided satisfactory support. Training has been provided giving the SLT the direction needed to make improvements. Having given this direction the LA are right to focus on ensuring the SLT maintains a high level of monitoring and action to embed what the school has agreed to do.

The school has evidence that achievement and standards are improving. Leadership and management are confident that a number of actions have brought this about but are aware that inconsistencies still remain. In order to deal with the inconsistencies the SLT is aware that they need to focus their efforts on identifying clearly what now needs to be done and to regularly check that all staff are on board.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Cook".

Her Majesty's Inspector