

9 October 2007

Mrs J Harkness
Headteacher
Bracken Edge Primary School
Newton Road
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS7 4HE

Dear Mrs Harkness

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 8 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 in February 2007, the school was asked to:

- increase the rate of progress and raise standards and achievement throughout the school
- improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage
- achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching and ensure that inadequate teaching is eliminated
- ensure all leaders and managers are equipped with the skills needed to rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's 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 school has made satisfactory progress and reversed the declining trend in standards reported in the previous inspection. Provisional results in the 2007 national tests and assessments in Key Stage 1 and 2 show improvements in all subjects that are greater than those found nationally, except for writing in Key Stage 1, where results fell. Standards generally remain below average although inspection evidence shows that pupils in most classes are now making better than expected progress in all subjects. This is because the school has a systematic approach to identifying and supporting underachieving groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. This strategy

has helped pupils to make particularly good progress in English in Key Stage 2 and they achieve well, but the impact has not yet been seen to the same extent in other subjects, or in Key Stage 1, and there is still room for pupils to achieve more.

The school has made good progress in improving the quality of the Foundation Stage. There was an improvement in children's skills in the end-of-Foundation-Stage assessments in 2007, compared to 2006. Since the previous inspection the Nursery and Reception classes have been combined into one unit and staff work well together to provide a rich and balanced curriculum. Children make good progress because the staff have an effective system for assessing achievement and planning activities that build further on it. The children make particularly good progress in reading and writing because they enjoy the way they are taught so much.

The school has made satisfactory progress in improving teaching. Two-thirds of the teaching is now good, but there is still a small proportion of inadequate teaching that needs to be eradicated. Where teaching is strong, teachers use assessment effectively to enable all pupils to make good progress. Work is at the correct level of challenge. Lessons have a clear objective, which pupils understand, and they receive regular feedback on their progress towards it. Pupils are given interesting activities and good opportunities to learn through discussion with partners. Where teaching is inadequate, the work is too easy for most pupils. Lessons are confusing and tedious because there is no clear focus and pupils spend too much time sitting and listening. An aspect for all teachers to develop further is ensuring that pupils know how to improve their progress by providing them with targets and with informative comments in marking.

The school has made satisfactory progress on leadership and management. The recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher give strong direction to improving standards. They have improved their own skills in monitoring and evaluation, and those of their middle leaders, through attendance at courses and through joint work with the local authority's advisers and a partner school. They now use a good range of strategies to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning and to secure improvement where required. The leadership team has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is developing the confidence to select only those aspects of external support that best meet their needs. The leaders' work, however, is identifying too many priorities for improvement and they need to be clearer about where the school will focus its efforts to raise standards further.

The local authority has a clear understanding of the school's progress and is providing effective support in relation to all the areas for development.

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

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector