

28 November 2007

Mrs V Mellor
Lapage Primary School and Nursery
Berkerend Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD3 8QX

Dear Mrs Mellor

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 27 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am also grateful to the local authority for assistance with this 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:

- raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science across the school
- raise the overall quality of teaching and learning to good or better.

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.

The school has responded positively to the issues identified at its inspection in February. The headteacher, ably supported by her new leadership team and all staff, has brought about improvement on the issues and these have been the main focus of the school's work. In doing so, teaching and learning, and standards and achievement have improved significantly and systems and procedures that were relatively new at the time of the last inspection are now having an impact across the school.

Standards and achievement in the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds showed a marked improvement in English, mathematics and science, although overall standards remain low and few pupils attain the higher levels. During the visit all pupils were making satisfactory and many were making good progress in lessons. Pupils were able to talk confidently about their targets for improvement, which are regularly reviewed. Pupils' work is marked regularly and tells pupils when they have

achieved their targets, which are in the front of books. However, marking which tells pupils what the next steps in their learning are is in its infancy and the school has plans in place to improve this element of academic guidance.

The school's robust tracking systems enable the staff to have a clear view of how much progress every pupil is making. These systems are used well to identify underachievement and plan interventions and catch up programmes. The level of children's spoken English when they enter the school in Nursery is very low and the school has much work to do to improve spoken English alongside other areas of the curriculum. The school does this very well through an emphasis on speaking and listening in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers' good planning ensures that English is spoken as often as possible and skilled support staff encourage speaking through a well planned curriculum. For example, in the Nursery, snack time in the morning was closely linked to the day's learning objective of naming shapes. Toast was cut into shapes and pupils had to choose which piece they wanted to eat by naming the correct shape. Consequently, speaking and listening was accelerated and learning was reinforced in a fun and enjoyable way. Pupils respond well to this approach and make good progress in their acquisition of language as they progress through the school.

Teaching and learning has improved and inspectors' judgements verified the school's own evaluation that two thirds of teaching is now good with some that is outstanding. This good practice was characterised by well planned lessons with activities that closely match pupils' abilities. Lessons were exciting and pupils' attitudes and relationships were good and aided their learning. Well established routines are in place so that pupils are able to work independently and learning takes place at a brisk pace with many opportunities for pupils to discuss learning with each other and the teacher. Teaching assistants are skilled at accelerating learning for small groups through good questioning techniques and good subject knowledge.

Pupils are very well behaved and respond well to teachers' questioning and the good teaching they receive. In a Year 2 lesson pupils confidently prepared different poems for a performance to the rest of the class. A group of pupils with little spoken English, who were working with a bilingual teaching assistant, were keen to go first. They confidently performed 'Incey Wincey Spider' with actions and expression. They listened carefully to other pupils' appraisal of their performance and agreed areas for improvement with the rest of the class. The level of pupils' enjoyment was very high and all pupils responded sensitively and sensibly to the self-assessment techniques used by the teacher.

Teaching has improved because of the headteacher and senior staff's rigorous monitoring procedures. Teachers are given clear areas for improvement and the best teachers are used effectively to coach and work alongside less experienced staff. Newly qualified teachers have good support and many opportunities to see good practice and therefore improve their own performance. The staff are fully committed to the headteacher and governors drive to raise standards across the school and speak enthusiastically about the improvements that the school has made. Furthermore, they are not complacent and see improved teaching and learning as the key to continued improvement in standards and achievement.

The senior team has taken responsibility for improved attendance. Many pupils take long breaks to visit relatives abroad. The headteacher does not authorise this absence and, along with the inclusion manager, works closely with families to raise the profile, and benefits to learning, of good attendance. There are many initiatives and rewards for good attendance which are effective and pupils appreciate. Pupils told inspectors, 'Attendance is important and you have to come to school every day if you want to learn.' Effective monitoring is in place and senior staff send letters home and often make home visits to discuss poor attendance. This has enabled the school to raise attendance to national levels.

The school is well placed to improve further. The support from the local authority has been effective in providing the school with the appropriate help and support that is needed. The school has made good use of professionals and consultants who have worked in the school. They are currently working with the University of the First Age to review and revise curriculum provision to make even more links between subject areas to enhance the enjoyment of learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Frost
Her Majesty's Inspector