

Mrs K Keiran
St Margaret's CofE Junior, Infant and Nursery
Hive Street
Hollinwood
Oldham
Lancashire
OL8 4QS

18 April 2008

Dear Mrs Keiran

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 April 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to your chair of governors and the representative of the local authority for taking the time to meet me and, of course, to your pupils. At the time of my visit you had been in post for 10 weeks. The substantive deputy headteacher is currently on exchange to a school in Australia and her role is being undertaken by the exchange teacher.

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 8 and 9 November 2006, the school was asked to: raise standards in science to an average level by the end of Year 6 and improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils in English at both key stages; improve the quality of marking and feedback to pupils and develop pupils' skills further in literacy and numeracy through different subjects. In addition, at that time, although the school had completed its procedures for safeguarding, it had not centralised its records.

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's arrangements for safeguarding pupils now meet current government requirements.

In the 2007 tests for English, mathematics and science the proportions of pupils gaining the expected Level 4, were broadly average but the number reaching the higher levels was much lower than the national figure. However, the school's progress measure shows that pupils are making more progress year-on-year as they

move through the school and in this respect, pupils are achieving at a national rate. The best progress is being made in mathematics. The results for seven year olds in 2007 showed an overall decline on those achieved in 2006: results in reading stayed the same but those for mathematics dipped and there was a considerable dip in the writing scores.

The school has made good progress in its efforts to improve science. Since the inspection of 2006, a lot of work has been carried out to overhaul the subject. This includes: a move from mixed-age teaching for science to year group cohorts; a review of planning and resources and the purchase of new schemes; the introduction of target groups; analysis of test papers and the identification of whole-school areas for improvement. As a result, standards in lessons, in pupils' books and results in internal tests are improving. The school is confident that it is on track to reach challenging targets this year. I observed two science lessons, both of which were of a high standard: pupils were engaged and highly motivated and making good progress. The school's most recent initiative, the introduction of a group tracking system for science, is a useful first step in identifying more able pupils and the school has plans to augment this with a more robust assessment system.

The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum and has gone some way to establish priorities for literacy and mathematics in other subjects. Much work on handling data is now undertaken in science lessons and a range of writing is covered in other subjects. The school intends to identify specific literacy activities more formally within the foundation subjects as part of its ongoing review of the curriculum. It has also introduced a weekly slot for pupils to write for an extended period of time. This work is marked and levelled according to National Curriculum standards and so pupils are able to see clearly how well they are doing. This rigour of marking is not yet consistent in all areas. The school recognises that there is still some way to go on this aspect.

Thank you once again for your help during the day. I hope that you found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector