

13 December 2007

Ms J Marland
Cavendish Primary School
Cavendish Road
West Didsbury
Manchester
M20 1JG

Dear Ms Marland

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 December 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. It was very helpful to talk to the pupils who were extremely polite and responsive. I also appreciate the time given by the chair of governors. Since the last inspection significant changes have been made to staffing. The interim leadership team which was put in place in September 2006 continued until your own recent appointment in September 2007. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2007 show standards which continue to be broadly average and their achievement is satisfactory.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 December 2006, the school was asked to:

- ensure evaluation of the work of the school is detailed, and that it identifies precisely and clearly the actions needed to improve standards
- improve attendance to bring it at least in line with the national average
- improve standards in writing to boost pupils' achievement
- improve the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and 2
- make better use of assessment and targets to enable pupils to improve their learning.

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 put systems in place to monitor its work, and procedures to analyse and evaluate the outcomes of this. A self-evaluation form provided by the leadership gives an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Action plans are in place to improve the areas identified by the last inspection and other areas prioritised by the school. However, there is insufficient consideration given in action

plans to quantifying the success of outcomes at regular milestones. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the headteacher and senior staff. Written feedback is given to staff. As a result, teachers are given opportunities to undertake professional training which is focused on the outcomes of lesson observations. This is beginning to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. Governors are informed by written reports from the headteacher. The middle leaders are beginning to take a greater monitoring role. For example, coordinators for literacy and numeracy are to start observing lessons beginning in the spring term 2008 and it is planned to extend this to all coordinators in a rolled out programme soon after. The monitoring of pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving. Each term, class teachers complete assessment sheets which are analysed by the senior leadership team. Class teachers use the results to inform meetings with parents each term. Governors receive written analysis of the progress which pupils are making towards the targets which are set by the school. The coordinators for English, mathematics and science do not undertake a subject evaluation of pupils' progress.

Whilst the latest figures for pupils' attendance are below average, the picture is an improving one. The percentage of pupils attending in the autumn term 2007 is a little better than the comparable period in 2006. Letters have been sent home to remind parents and carers of the importance of full attendance. A particular emphasis is given to deterring families from taking extended holidays during term time, a factor which accounts for a significant proportion of pupils' absence from school. In school assemblies pupils are also reminded of the need to come to school. A local authority scheme to encourage good attendance on 100 consecutive days has impressed the pupils who spoke to the inspector; they liked the idea of prizes and rewards. The school also works closely with the education welfare officer who follows up persistent absence by making home visits. The first day response system in school is now providing a thorough instant check on the reasons for pupils' absence.

Pupils who spoke with the inspector agreed unanimously that they have many more opportunities to write. They were also clear that all pupils have targets set to help them improve their writing. Observations in school during the inspection confirm that pupils have a suitable range of writing activities which are beginning to impact positively on standards. Teachers have undertaken training to help start a major writing initiative in Key Stage 2. It is too soon to securely measure the degree of improvement.

The appointment of new teachers has been combined with several changes to the responsibilities of some existing staff. As a result, the teaching team in the Foundation Stage is significantly different to that seen at the last inspection. Provision in Nursery and Reception classes is good. Effective planning and organisation leads to all pupils developing well in their social and personal skills. Pupils behave well. Due to very effective attention to developing pupils' language and communication skills, they make good progress in speaking and listening. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and caring throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall with some good features. Effective use is made of information and communication technology to project the lesson focus, and this helps to engage pupils' interest and maintain

their concentration. There is good collaboration between teachers to ensure that pupils in comparable classes and ages receive the same entitlement for learning. The pace of learning varies between classes. Marking is inconsistent. At best it provides clear feedback to pupils about the quality of their work, about their effort and what they should do to improve. Some of the work seen during the inspection was unmarked. Teaching assistants are well deployed and give good guidance and support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The quality and use of assessment is variable across the school. Pupils are generally knowledgeable about targets set for them in literacy. These are group targets which include a focus on grammar, punctuation and strategies for better writing. Some pupils know about targets set for them to improve their reading skills. Targets are not consistently set for all pupils to improve in mathematics or science. There is inconsistency in the teaching methods used to assess the progress of pupils. Some teachers are skilled in their use of questions and successfully enable pupils to think for themselves and to develop their learning. In some lessons pupils are beginning to develop ways of assessing their own work and that of their classmates. In other lessons teachers talk for too long and give insufficient time for pupils to respond and to think. The school's leadership intends to provide training for teachers in the use of assessment in January 2008.

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

Yours sincerely

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector