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The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Waring

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 31 January 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 the pupils I met with for sharing their views on teaching and learning. Since the school's last inspection, the headteacher has been replaced with an interim consultant headteacher for the autumn and spring terms. Governors have appointed a permanent headteacher designate from April 2008. The leadership team has been restructured to include the headteacher, deputy headteacher and two teachers with teaching and learning responsibilities as Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 leader and Key Stage 2 leader. In relation to their starting points and capabilities on the basis of the school's data and observed evidence, pupils' achievement is inadequate. This is because they are not making sufficient progress, particularly in mathematics.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 4 and 5 July 2007, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards in English (particularly in writing) and mathematics as a matter of urgency especially in Key Stage 1.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in learning with higher expectations for achievement and greater challenge in lessons, especially for the more able.
- Raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good standard through rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluation.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement. Pupils' achievement has not significantly improved for a number of reasons. Valuable time has been invested in restructuring the leadership team, reorganising the school into single age classes and sharpening teachers' skills in assessing and planning pupils' work. The headteacher has successfully implemented systematic procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in English and mathematics.

These are being used by leaders and managers to assess pupils' achievement. However, teachers are still not using the information well enough to pitch their lessons with sufficient precision for all pupils.

During the inspection, part lessons of every class in Key Stages 1 and 2 were observed. The most able are insufficiently challenged in almost all lessons. In some lessons, the least able pupils' progress is hindered by activities that rely too heavily on their underdeveloped fine motor skills, especially in mathematics lessons. This inhibits their learning in the subject. As a result, inadequacies persist in the amount of progress that some pupils are making, especially in mathematics. A very small proportion of good teaching was seen. In addition, the legacy of pupils' underachievement is not being tackled with sufficient rigour, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4. Apart from good booster classes for some Year 6 pupils in writing, no other effective intervention programmes are in place. Pupils' underperformance in other age groups in English, and especially in mathematics, is still evident in lessons and in their books. Not all teachers have high enough expectations so that pupils enter into a productive work ethic. The school is not on track to reach its target to raise the quality of good teaching to 70% by July 2008.

The local authority's revised statement of action is satisfactory. Weaknesses in the original version have been addressed. However, the LA's failure to deliver training in intervention programmes to staff on time has set the school back in addressing pupils' underachievement. The impact of the LA's statement of action is satisfactory in English but inadequate in mathematics. Support from the LA's literacy consultant has been embraced and used to drive forward the improvement agenda in English, particularly in writing. Despite this, pupils' progress as seen in outcomes of their end of autumn term assessments was negligible. The subject leader has responded swiftly by introducing further strategies to address weaknesses. Subject leadership in mathematics has been less effective and the LA has provided insufficient support. Standards remain exceptionally low in mathematics in some year groups and the proportion of pupils making insufficient progress in mathematics lessons is higher than in English lessons. Two reviews led by the local authority have helped the leadership team and subject leaders to moderate judgements on the quality of teaching and to agree where teaching is beginning to improve and where further support is needed.

The school has made inadequate progress in addressing the points for improvement. This visit has raised serious concerns about the standard of education provided by the school and I am recommending a return visit.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Ensure that adequate progress is made in raising standards in mathematics as well as English.
- Introduce effective intervention programmes to tackle some pupils' underperformance.
- Enable pupils to measure their success and evaluate their achievements.

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

Yours sincerely

Hinda Killiman

Her Majesty's Inspector