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31 October 2007

Mr K Rickard  
Headteacher  
Emneth Primary School  
Hollycroft Road  
Emneth  
Wisbech  
Norfolk  
PE14 8AY

Dear Mr Rickard,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30<sup>th</sup> October, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please would you also thank the chair of governors and parent governors for attending meetings.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> October 2006, the school was asked to:

- ensure that pupils make the progress they are capable of by improving the quality and consistency of teaching
- develop the use of assessments of pupils' attainment so that all pupils receive work that is challenging for them
- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school
- ensure that there is more productive communication with parents so that their views are taken into account and their concerns are acted upon

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.

Achievement and standards are unsatisfactory. Inadequate progress has been made with improving consistency in the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable instability of staffing which is a key factor affecting the

achievement and standards of pupils throughout the school. Further factors are the lack of challenge in the work set for middle and higher attaining pupils and teacher expectations which are not high enough in some lessons. Teachers do not routinely plan together to ensure consistency of progression between year groups. The improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006 have not been maintained. In 2007, Year 2 pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below the national average and the lowest for five years. Pupils also made inadequate progress between Year 3 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science so that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were also below the national average. Pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics is an issue throughout the school.

On examination of current pupils' work, there is still too much variability in the progress being made by middle and higher attaining pupils in different classes with the result that too many are not fulfilling their potential. The presentation of some pupils' work is weak. In contrast, pupils with additional learning needs make satisfactory progress compared to pupils in other schools nationally. The introduction of focused intervention programmes to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of these pupils is having a positive impact on accelerating their progress and improving their performance.

A satisfactory start has been made in tracking pupils' progress at regular intervals but teachers have yet to make full use of the information to inform planning. The records are presented in different formats and not always dated. This makes it difficult to see at a glance how all pupils are progressing. However, the information is used well to inform the selection of pupils to join intervention groups. During the visit, I discussed the reasons behind the significant increase in the proportion of pupils who have been entered onto the special needs register at school action level. The school has not fully understood the criteria for registering children at this level because they are including all the children in intervention groups.

Satisfactory progress has been made in strengthening the monitoring roles of subject leaders. They now conduct regular lesson observations and give focused written feedback on teaching. They also scrutinise pupils' work and make pertinent observations. There is scope for extending the role further to include the monitoring of teachers' planning and more robust evaluation of pupils' learning. All these activities are worthwhile and provide helpful evidence on the quality of provision to inform development planning. The leadership team and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, they try to tackle too many issues at once. The present action plans are not sufficiently focused on identifying staff development needs and the steps that need to be taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school receives advisory support from the local authority but there has been insufficient emphasis on addressing the areas for improvement which were identified in the last inspection report.

The school has made satisfactory progress in improving communication with parents. The school's website has been updated and there are regular newsletters. Parent governors report that parents appreciate the extended time now given for parent consultation interviews and the introduction of mid year written reports. Parents have rightly been concerned about staffing difficulties but the school has kept them well informed of teaching arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely

Tricia Pritchard

Her Majesty's Inspector