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Mr Stuart Muir  
The Headteacher  
Dedworth Middle School  
Smiths Lane  
Windsor  
SL4 5PE

Dear Mr Muir

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 March 2008, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to your pupils, staff and chair of governors.

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 14 and 15 March 2007, the school was asked to work on the following areas for improvement:

- Raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics;
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that more lessons are good, or better, and ensure that good practice is shared;
- Raise levels of achievement by ensuring a consistent programme of target setting and tracking across the school.

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 and in raising pupils' achievement.

Good efforts are being made to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Changes in the way these two areas are led and managed are already resulting in improvements; underperformance is being addressed and standards are rising. Both subject leaders are not complacent and would have liked the rate of improvement to have been faster but, in part, this has been restricted by some staffing issues. These are being addressed. Both subject leaders have a clear vision about what is needed and their planning for improvement is very good.

The school has now established a thorough programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. From lesson observations made during my visit, it was clear that staff have appropriately high expectations of the pupils. The work seen was challenging and in some mathematics lessons, for example, the right level of challenge was being offered to pupils of different abilities. This enabled them to work at their own levels, and all were making at least good progress as a result. In all lessons seen it was evident that the pupils were enjoying their learning and that good opportunities were offered for independent work. The school's accurate evaluations show that the quality of teaching is improving and that senior staff know the strengths and weaknesses that exist. One area that senior staff have recognised that needs improving is that there is still no consistent approach to fostering pupils' literacy skills. Subject-specific language and concepts are not always properly displayed, or referred to, in lessons and opportunities for pupils to read aloud are not always seized.

Procedures for tracking pupils' attainment have improved significantly since the last inspection and this too is leading to rising standards. The school now has a robust and effective system for target setting and tracking the progress pupils are making. Where underperformance is identified, good intervention strategies are being applied. This was clearly seen in mathematics, for example. A further strength of this programme is that parents are being kept informed of the progress being made by their child. The tracking of progress is further helped by the good marking of books that was seen in a number of subjects. However, though marking was regular and thorough, staff are not consistently telling the pupils about the level that they are working at, or how they might improve. The pupils are now being set realistic and challenging targets and progress is being tracked. Standards are rising, but in some classes pupils are not being given enough information about how well they are doing in relation to their targets.

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

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham  
Additional Inspector