

25 June 2008

Mrs N Howe
Headteacher
Thackley Primary School
Town Lane
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Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD10 8PJ

Dear Mrs Howe

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 24 June 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to thank the chair of governors for giving time to meet with me and the pupils for being so welcoming and for speaking with me so politely and articulately.

Since the last inspection in October 2007 there have been several changes to the senior management team, including the appointment of an additional member from within the school and a deputy headteacher new to the school from April 2008. A new inclusion leader has been appointed and is due to join in September 2008. Despite the extensive ongoing building work, both inside and outside, there is very little disruption to the work of the school.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 31 October 2007, the school was asked to:

- Improve achievement, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in relation to the pace of lessons and the level of challenge provided for pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils understand what they need to do in order to improve their work.

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 the pupils' achievement.

Following the last inspection in October 2007, the headteacher, with good support from Education Bradford and from the school's leadership team, acted swiftly and with determination to bring about the necessary improvements. The leadership team

shares the headteacher's clear vision as to what can be achieved and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have worked together effectively to engender a sense of purpose and united teamwork amongst all staff. This is driving improvement at a good rate. Their thorough monitoring and evaluation has been used well to develop focused plans. These are proving effective in securing good improvement to the quality of teaching and learning, which in turn, is raising pupils' achievement.

The school's detailed assessment and tracking information shows that, since the last inspection, pupils are making greater progress in all year groups in English, mathematics and science. This improvement is consistent for pupils of all abilities. The school's analysis of this information is also used to better effect to determine which pupils need additional support or help in small groups. Although these pupils are making better progress, the school has yet to evaluate the specific effectiveness of the different interventions it is using, so that these can be targeted more precisely to raise achievement further. Increased expectations of all pupils, but particularly of the most able, have enabled many to make great gains during this school year. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils are reaching the higher levels in all subjects, although there is still some way to go before all pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable. Some imaginative lesson planning is allowing pupils to use literacy and numeracy in different subjects. This is enabling them to see the purpose of these skills and so is raising their achievement.

The gains in pupils' progress are directly related to improvements in the quality of teaching. The school's own evaluations, and findings from this inspection, confirm that there is a growing proportion of good lessons. Lessons are carefully planned to provide greater challenge and the varied activities meet the full range of needs in the class, improving the pupils' achievement. Effective guidance from senior leaders on how best to meet the needs of the most able is improving the quality of teaching for all. As a result of this guidance, teachers provide increased opportunities for pupils to think about what they are learning, to work with others and to show greater independence in problem solving and investigation. Lessons now move at a swifter pace and much better use is made of time. The variety of activities has increased pupils' involvement and interest in learning, so that this is now much more consistent across the school.

Pupils are very clear about the learning intentions for each lesson and in many classes they are involved at its start in identifying how they will know they have succeeded by the end. In the most successful lessons there are regular pauses for pupils to check their own progress, giving them a clear idea of what they have to do to improve their work as the lesson proceeds. Sometimes, as well, pupils explain or demonstrate to the class how they have tackled a particular problem and the teacher makes good use of this to help everyone increase their understanding of what is required. All pupils have individual targets, specifically designed to improve their literacy and they are becoming more skilled in evaluating their progress against these. However, opportunities for pupils to assess their own or others' work are not fully identified or developed in all classes. The school has developed an approach to marking which shows pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Although this is applied thoroughly and systematically in some instances, its

use is by no means consistent in every class. As a result, pupils in some classes are less clear as to how to improve their work and, consequently, their progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

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

Yours sincerely

Liz Godman
Additional Inspector