

Cambridge  
Education  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01223 578500  
Direct F 01223 578501  
rsp.inspections@camb-ed.com



8 May 2008

Mrs Anita Barker  
The Headteacher  
Scott Lower School  
Hawk Drive  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK41 7JA

Dear Mrs Barker

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff, your deputy chair of governors, the consultant headteacher and the local authority's school advisor gave when I inspected your school on 7 May 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Thanks also to the pupils for their help.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 24 and 25 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- Improve the quality of teaching by making more effective use of individual targets and information from checks on pupils' progress to plan lessons that will improve pupils' learning.
- Track and monitor more rigorously the progress of all pupils to ensure that support and interventions are timely and effective.
- Rigorously monitor the effectiveness of whole school management policies and systems, embed improvements and hold individuals to account.

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.

Since the inspection of September 2007 one senior member of staff has left.

The headteacher, who joined the school very shortly before the inspection, has with the support of the local authority (LA), responded purposefully to the inspection findings. As a result, teaching, which was inadequate at the inspection, is now improving. No inadequate lessons were seen during the monitoring visit. Lessons are now better planned. Work is matched more closely to pupils' abilities and development needs. Generally pupils are given clear information about what they will

be learning. This is not completely secure, however, because sometimes pupils are told what activity they will be carrying out rather than what learning they should be doing. Behaviour in lessons is generally settled, but sometimes pupils become restless if a teaching point is being laboured or if the task does not hold their interest. Teachers' questions are well targeted at both those pupils who volunteer to answer and those the teacher wants particularly to involve. In some classrooms this approach is used well to ensure that boys, whose progress has previously caused some concern, are learning. There is evidence that the gap between the standards achieved by girls and boys, while still too wide, is reducing.

A rigorous system of twice termly assessments has been devised to track pupils' progress. The accuracy of assessments has been assured by the involvement of consultants from the local authority. It has resulted in some focussed support for those who are falling behind. The subsequent monitoring of their progress shows that this is effective. The day-to-day marking of pupils' work is usually thorough, with some well considered targets for the next step of their learning. There is not sufficient emphasis placed on correct spelling or the development of handwriting, however. A good system of continuous assessment has been developed which enables both teachers and pupils to identify where progress has been made and what the next steps in learning should be. However, its potential to act as an 'early warning system' to identify those whose progress may be too slow is currently underdeveloped.

The headteacher's monitoring of the school's work quickly identified a number of areas of weakness in the school's provision. With the help of the local authority much training and support has been provided to overcome these, for example on the accurate use of phonics, the accurate assessment of pupils' work, aspects of literacy and numeracy teaching and the development of management skills such as the monitoring of pupils' work. This has had a significant impact on the work of the school.

There are robust systems for holding teachers to account. The headteacher holds twice termly meetings with each class teacher to review the progress made by each pupil in their care. There are regular checks of pupils' work to ascertain progress and to check the appropriateness of the tasks they are given and of the quality of lesson planning and teaching. There are few subject leaders in post currently, the headteacher takes on some of this work. The headteacher and governors are aware that this is not a sustainable position. However, where subject leadership exists its role is becoming well developed and includes monitoring activities, though not yet observing lessons. Governors are now more involved in the school and monitor in detail the progress being made with the school's improvement plan. Their involvement with more strategic matters such as the staffing structure is also good. They involve pupils well, for example the school council was asked to survey boys' reading preferences in order to ensure that the school library catered well for them, boys reading being a concern. This influenced the choice of books which were then purchased.

The result of the school's work is that the progress which pupils are making, after a slow start, has improved and is satisfactory overall for pupils of all abilities.

The local authority has provided good support, for example through the training it has provided and also through its brokering of other support such as that of an experienced consultant headteacher and an advanced skills teacher. Its revised support plan for the school does not clearly specify who is responsible for leading improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

Alan Alder  
Her Majesty's Inspector