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3 September 2008

Mr S Poole
The Headteacher
Ulverley School
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Dear Mr Poole

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 15 July 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

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 27 and 28 November 2007, the school was asked to:

- ensure that all teaching and learning are good so that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress and underachievement is eradicated
- improve the quality and consistency of target setting across the school so the process contributes more effectively to pupils' learning and progress
- review more frequently the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities towards their individual targets.

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.

In April 2008 a new headteacher was appointed. A number of teachers are leaving school this term to be replaced in September 2008 by a deputy headteacher, Key Stage 1 coordinator and two other teachers. The school benefits from the effective support of the local authority School Improvement Partner and subject consultants. The local authority statement of action has been strengthened, but does not sufficiently coordinate the resources and action being taken to ensure school improvements throughout the time between school inspections. The headteacher is demonstrating strong leadership. He is successfully driving school improvement at a rapid pace. The headteacher, local authority and governors have worked effectively

this year to lay firm foundations for future improvements by strengthening teaching and leadership. Improvements in teaching and learning are now underpinned by a strong team spirit and raised expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve. Leadership is more effective, particularly in science and the Foundation Stage. However, some other leaders do not demonstrate the capability to lead the developments required for consistent improvement across the school.

School information and pupils' work indicate that since the inspection progress has accelerated and is now generally satisfactory throughout the school and continues to be good in the Nursery and Reception classes. In Year 2, results for 2008 show that standards continue to be average in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2008 unvalidated results for Year 6 pupils show that overall standards are similar to last year and remain below average. However, pupils have made better progress than previous year groups to attain these standards because of their lower starting point in Year 3. The proportion of pupils attaining the average level in English and mathematics has risen this year. However, standards remain below average because the proportion of pupils attaining this level remains below average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level remains below average. Standards in science have risen because pupils have made good progress. This has narrowed the gap between school standards and the average.

Teaching has improved since the inspection. Lessons have a brisker pace to them, keeping pupils engaged in their work. Teachers have been successful in ensuring that pupils know the purpose of lessons. Good use is being made of teaching assistants to support the work of different groups of pupils in lessons. In some lessons a better use is being made of assessment information to inform planning, so that work is more closely matched to the differing abilities of pupils. However, in other lessons the work does not sufficiently challenge the more able children so that they find it too easy.

The impact of pupil targets and marking procedures on learning has improved since the last inspection. This is underpinned by an adequate, and improving, measure for tracking the progress being made by pupils. In many English and mathematics lessons pupils report enthusiastically that their targets are helpful in enabling them to understand the next steps they need to take in their work. Marking in English lessons gives good advice on how pupils should make these improvements to their work. The application of school recommendations for targets and marking by some teachers has been inconsistent. In some lessons pupils cannot remember their targets or understand what they mean.

Since the last inspection the school has been effective in ensuring that all the individual education plans of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are reviewed with parents at least twice a year. However, parents are not yet sufficiently involved with the formulation of these plans so that they share an equal partnership in their child's' learning. The ability of many teachers to plan work that is pitched at the correct level for these pupils has improved and they respond positively to the targets that are set for them. Whilst individual education plans ensure that pupils' progress is regularly reviewed, the targets and success criteria are not sufficiently tailored to meet each pupil's specific needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector