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Mr David Pearson
Headteacher
Sutton-on-Sea Primary School
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Dear Mr Pearson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 June, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I appreciated your openness and our constructive dialogue about what the school needs to do next in order to bring about more rapid improvement.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 16 May 2007, the school was asked to:

- increase the incidence of good and better teaching so that pupils are challenged, learning is brought to life and pupils across the school make good progress
- make sure pupils' performance is rigorously assessed and outcomes are used effectively to raise standards
- ensure that the leadership team, subject leaders and governors play a full role in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school and the progress of pupils.

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.

The 2007 results in Key Stage 1 national tests were disappointing with a significant proportion of pupils not reaching the levels expected for their age and in particular in writing pupils significantly underperformed. The 2007 test results indicate that in Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils who took the tests had made satisfactory progress overall, although in English their progress was below what is expected nationally. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English were significantly below that what is expected.

In mathematics and science pupils' attainment was in line with the national average and science was showing a small but consistent and steady improvement during the past four years.

Assessment and tracking data shows that during the past eight months pupils are making consistently satisfactory and at times good progress. A range of intervention programmes are being deployed which are satisfactorily benefiting pupils who have fallen behind or have additional learning needs and also for specifically high achieving pupils. Pupil's attainment tracker profiles clearly indicate satisfactory and often good progress for these pupils. Data systems provide adequate information but analysis is still complicated and time consuming. Current and predicted attainment for groups of pupils is not clearly identified and not easily accessible to all staff.

The local authority provides good support for the school. As a result, all staff have further developed their teaching skills and improved classroom practice.

First hand evidence during the visit and your in depth knowledge of the skills and abilities of your staff indicate that overall teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with some good elements. In the foundation stage and at Key Stage 1 teaching is now good. Planning is more focussed and better informed through pupil's individual attainment tracker profiles. Teachers often make good use of pupil centred targets and pupils on the whole know and appreciate these. The quality and consistency of the use of pupil targets however is not yet consistent across the whole school and progress overall remains satisfactory. The school has done well in developing a more vibrant and interesting learning environment which aids pupil's learning; one pupil for example commented: "the stuff on the walls helps me learn".

Distributed leadership is effective within the leadership team. Subject leaders are not yet involved in a more formalised monitoring and evaluating process, however in English and mathematics leaders now evaluate their subjects and scrutinise pupils tracking data. As a result, focussed intervention programmes are beginning to raise pupil's attainment. The roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants have been developed substantially in recent months, as a result provision mapping is accurate and intervention groups are taught effectively.

The governing body has made a sound start at developing their own knowledge and understanding of the school. Strategies are in place to ensure they are better informed and monitor achievement and standards in school more closely. Governors are beginning to gain a more complex overview of the school but are aware that they still need to develop this further so that their support and challenge to the school can become more rigorous and effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Karin Heap
Additional Inspector