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Mr S Busby  
The Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Busby

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 July 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am particularly grateful to the members of the senior leadership team, representatives of the governing body, the teaching assistants and pupils for the discussions I had with them.

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 22 and 23 May 2007, the school was asked to the following areas for improvement.

- Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage so that children progress well in all areas of their learning.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good enough to help pupils of all abilities to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Make sure that target-setting and marking accurately identify each pupil's next steps in learning and provide clear guidance to pupils to improve their performance.

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.

The headteacher has set out a very clear action plan. This is communicated well through the restructured leadership team. There has been a strong focus on raising expectations and presenting more challenge to pupils. The development of teaching and learning is now derived from careful analysis of standards and achievement.

Evaluating school performance is rigorous and governors are now providing the challenge through asking searching questions of school leaders.

The 2007 national test results for Year 6 were below average. Given their capabilities, pupils made inadequate progress in mathematics and writing. The school has set adequately challenging targets for this year but has aspirational longer term objectives. It has revised and redeveloped its system for tracking progress and ensuring that areas of underachievement are addressed. The new system is providing evidence to show that most pupils are making good progress. The unvalidated 2008 national test results for Year 6 suggest standards are above average. The effective use of well chosen resources to tackle gaps in pupils' skills is having a positive impact, particularly in numeracy and writing.

Good progress has been made in addressing the shortcomings in provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. The Reception class areas are bright, inviting and well equipped to support independent learning. The outdoor area is developing well into an area that encourages creative thinking and interplay. There are well established systems for day to day tracking that all adults contribute to. The progress children make in all areas of learning are analysed and good work has started in matching more closely resources to meet the individual needs of children. There is a good balance of teacher led activities and those that children choose for themselves. Appropriate emphasis is given to developing social skills through role play and daily routines. More attention is now being given to planning activities to promote knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children are very motivated and highly independent; a measure of the successful teaching and provision.

The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is no inadequate teaching and much better systems in place for lesson planning that are consistently applied across the school. Lessons provide more opportunity for pupils to work together discussing ideas and listening to those of others. Learning intentions are clear and activities are well matched to the different ability groups. Teachers are making much better use of assessment information and there are good examples of planning for specific groups. During the main part of the lesson, questions help teachers assess learning but they do not always act on this information, leading to a lack of pace for some more able pupils. Excellent use is made of teaching assistants to ensure small group teaching is effective. The thoughtful programme of training for teaching assistants and teachers has significantly strengthened expertise in teaching English and mathematics. This has further added to the effectiveness of learning by pupils and their overall good progress.

There is a rigorous assessment cycle in place with highly effective tracking for all pupils. This is beginning to develop a culture of accountability where teachers have accurate data on the progress of individuals and groups which is discussed with the headteacher as part of the performance management cycle. This data is enabling challenging targets to be set for most individuals and year cohorts, but still need refining for the more able pupils. The intervention that follows from progress tracking is thoroughly monitored to ensure maximum effectiveness. The revised

marking policy is consistently applied across the school and shows good examples of guiding pupils towards their next steps in learning. Pupils appreciate the thorough marking and the personal targets. They consider that they really help. Good work has started on involving pupils and parents more in the process of target setting and it will be interesting to see how this develops as a tool for pupils to reflect on their own learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk  
Her Majesty's Inspector