

PROTECT - INSPECTION

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Mr Grahame Downey
Acting Headteacher
Hudson Road Primary School
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Dear Mr Downey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 November 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information that you provided before and during my visit. I also appreciated the time given by the chair of governors and the local authority representative to meet and talk with me about the improvements made since the inspection in November 2007. Please, also, extend my thanks to the pupils who met with me over lunch to talk about life at school.

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has moved on to another school and two experienced local headteachers have been seconded for part of the week to support the school. One of these acting headteachers has taken responsibility for supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage and the second to help develop the quality of school planning and financial control. The current deputy headteacher is also an acting headteacher for one and a half days each week, which complements well the roles of the two seconded headteachers. It is anticipated that a full-time permanent appointment will be made in December, to start at the beginning of the summer term 2009.

As a result of the inspection in November 2007, the school was asked to:

- increase the proportion of good teaching so as to raise pupils' standards, especially in literacy and science;
- develop opportunities for creativity and independence throughout the curriculum.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

Children start school in the Foundation Stage with levels well below those expected for their age. By the time they reach the start of statutory schooling, the vast majority are still below the levels expected across all the areas of learning. Overall, however, the children make good progress across the Foundation Stage. The last full validated data for 2007 showed that standards were well below average at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' progress across the school was broadly satisfactory. The 2008 unvalidated data for Key Stage 1 show that although standards are still below national averages, there have been improvements in all three areas. At Key Stage 2, standards are similarly below average, but are also improving. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving, which in turn is helping to raise pupils' standards in literacy and science. School and local authority reports written since the previous inspection indicate that while most lessons are at least satisfactory there are occasional occurrences of inadequate teaching. There is now a systematic process in school for assessing the quality of teaching and learning, and its impact on pupils' progress. Lesson planning is thorough, and used well by teachers to ensure that learning tasks are appropriately matched to the range of abilities in the class. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, and conducive to learning. Activities are generally well organised by class teachers, all of whom are keen to ensure that their pupils make progress in lessons. Occasionally, however, teachers miss opportunities to give the pupils greater independence in their learning, especially those capable of achieving high standards. The support from the bilingual support assistants is working very well, and is helping to ensure that pupils with English as an additional language make suitable progress relative to their abilities. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, although a few do not always listen as carefully as they should, which means that on these occasions the teachers have to spend more time than they would want organising and progressing the pupils' learning.

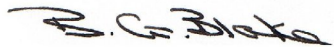
The pupils are very positive about attending the school. Those who met with the inspector said that they go to a 'good school because there are nice subjects and a nice new building'. The pupils appreciate the support they get from staff, but they are also aware that they need to do even better in their work. The pupils also expressed their enjoyment of newer styles of teaching and learning, especially in those subjects where they get more 'hands on' experience. These positive attitudes are helping the pupils to enjoy school and make progress.

Satisfactory progress has also been made in developing opportunities for creativity and independence throughout the curriculum. A number of positive initiatives have taken place since the previous inspection, including in-service training for the lead member of staff, ongoing local authority support, and developments in the school's new approach to planning the curriculum around focused topics. This style of joint planning is encouraging a more systematic approach to progression and continuity of the curriculum across the school. However, evaluation and monitoring strategies to accurately and regularly assess the impact of this provision are currently underdeveloped.

The school has received very effective support from the local authority and school improvement partner. The placement of two experienced headteachers for three days and one half day respectively each week, is very effective. Delegation of their responsibilities, alongside that of the acting headteacher from within the school, is very clear and well referenced in the detailed school improvement plan. Actions have been effectively targeted, including supporting the governing body to develop its 'critical friend role'. The governing body is now well placed to provide both support and challenge, proportionate to the work and successes of the school. Collectively, all senior leaders and managers now share a common sense of purpose and direction, which is helping to raise standards and improve pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely



Brian G Blake
Her Majesty's Inspector