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4 December 2008

Mr M Dickson
The Headteacher
Foxfield Primary School
Sandbach Place
London
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Dear Mr Dickson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 November 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and governors for their contribution to the 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.

Since the last inspection, there have been substantial changes in staffing. You joined the school as headteacher in the summer term and a large new management team took office at the beginning of this term, when six newly qualified teachers also joined the school. The chair of governors recently resigned from the governing body and a new chair is due to be elected this term.

As a result of the inspection on 7 and 8 November 2007, the school was asked to:

- improve standards, especially in reading for pupils in Years 1 and 2 so that teaching, learning and assessment are more effective and pupils quickly learn basic skills and read suitably challenging books
- ensure that there is consistently good teaching and challenge in all lessons, so that pupils make consistently good progress
- improve governance, so that all governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and can better influence school improvements.

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.

At Key Stage 2, the unvalidated results for 2008 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level rose substantially in mathematics and slightly in English, but fell in science. Standards remained substantially below average in English and science. The school met its targets in mathematics only. Girls attained much lower standards than boys.

At Key Stage 1, standards rose significantly in 2008. The rise was greatest in writing where attainment was broadly average. Although they rose, standards remained exceptionally low in reading and below average in mathematics. Attainment was similar to that of similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics but better than that in writing. Boys' attainment in writing and reading rose by much more than that of girls. This brought boys' and girls' attainments in line with each other in reading, and boys' attainment in writing above that of girls in the school and of boys nationally. Standards rose markedly for pupils eligible for free school meals, bringing them above standards for others and for this group nationally, particularly in reading. They also rose for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, bringing them above similar groups nationally. These improvements are substantial. Pupils in Year 2 received effective support and intervention, including from the local authority, which helped them to reach these standards. Nevertheless, standards did not rise for all groups, so pupils not eligible for free school meals and those with Black African heritage did not do better in reading in 2008 and the proportion reaching the highest level in mathematics fell. The school has analysed the performance of groups and taken appropriate steps that are already enabling standards and progress to rise for both those who are, and those who are not, receiving additional support. It has further appropriate plans for additional staffing to support class teaching and demonstrates sound building of capacity to improve standards through teaching and intervention solely by its own staff.

Across the whole school, there is now a consistent approach to teaching guided reading. A set of levelled books has been purchased for use in school. As a result of improved assessment and planning, pupils are given suitably challenging books to read and are making better progress. They know strategies to help them read words and use them successfully. The school has identified the need for the books taken home also to be levelled and has decided to purchase some of these books. Parents feel better informed about their children's progress but there is room for them to be more involved and for sharper monitoring of pupils' progress through books read at home and in school. There is an increased range of targeted support and pupils say that the help from adults has improved.

Pupils and parents report better teaching, with improved behaviour in lessons and more challenging work. The quality of teaching varies, with some that is consistently good and some that is weaker. The school's data on pupils' progress are consistent with this, showing improvement and variation. The school and local authority are taking appropriate steps to support improvement, in particular for the many newly qualified teachers. There is evidence of this leading to higher quality teaching. Evaluation of lessons by senior leaders is accurate, but only some managers have undertaken this. Areas identified for development have assisted improvements but


there is room for a more consistent focus on the progress of all pupils and for accurate development of their subject-specific understanding. There is variation in the use of targets for pupils and the quality of guidance about how to improve.

There has been least progress in governance. However, changes in leadership and organisation are imminent at the upcoming governors' meeting. During the inspection, governors conveyed an increasing understanding of their role and the school. While the governing body as a whole has not raised its expertise sufficiently in supporting, challenging and holding the school to account, new governors with pertinent experience have joined and individuals have attended some training. Governors have increased their links with the school and visits to it. They receive more information about how the school is doing but do not have a clear view of its performance or sharp focus on the most important issues to work on.

The local authority has assisted the school in moving forward through support for staff and directly for pupils in Year 2. There is a need for continued assistance to improve teaching quality, to support newly qualified teachers and to develop leadership and management capacity across the school. No overall training for the whole governing body has been provided to raise the level of support and challenge it provides.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gillian S. Close". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Her Majesty's Inspector