

29 January 2009

Mrs S Johnson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Johnson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 January 2009, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would be grateful if you could pass on my appreciation for the help also given to me by your pupils, colleagues and governor.

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 10 and 11 January 2008 the school was asked to:

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.
- Develop tracking procedures that effectively monitor pupils' progress to enable the correct level of support to be given to all pupils.
- Ensure that teachers' marking gives pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve.
- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress.

Conditions at the school continue, in the main, as they were during the last inspection. The atmosphere is calm, orderly and purposeful. Pupils are well behaved, happy and highly motivated to learn. Staff are capable, conscientious and well organised. In addition, staff stability has returned to a healthy state and the school

now has a full complement of managers to ensure that it fulfils its aims and promotes improvement.

Pupils enter the Reception class with attainment which is broadly as expected. In 2008, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 showed attainment to be average and this indicates that these pupils made satisfactory progress overall. Between 2004 and 2007 standards at the end of Year 2 fell. This fall was arrested in 2008, when test results showed a small improvement overall, and good improvements in reading and writing competence in particular. The school has invested much effort into reversing the former trend of decline. It has had expert and effective assistance from specialists in the local authority to help secure this. The school recognises that further improvement is necessary and has drawn up plans to achieve this. In particular the attainment of boys overall, and the performance of both boys and girls in mathematics, need to improve further.

National test results in 2008 for pupils in Year 6 showed standards to be above average. Given that these pupils entered Year 3 with average attainment, this indicates that they made good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils' work seen during the visit was of a good quality throughout the school. Their achievement was good and they were attaining at above average levels. For those in Key Stage 1, this represents a rise in standards.

Leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance have improved significantly since the last inspection. Having returned as headteacher from long-term sick leave you are firmly back at the helm and capably steering the school through a major effort to consolidate and improve provision. The staffing instability which undermined the continuity of teaching prior to and during the last inspection has been resolved. There is now a full complement of well qualified and effective teaching and non-teaching staff. The senior leadership team has been restructured to secure better delegation of responsibilities. This has improved the school's capacity to monitor and evaluate its performance, not least in the teaching of, and attainment within, the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has a clear view of its strengths and areas in need of development. This shows, for example, in its accurate self-evaluation documentation. The governing body has developed its expertise in evaluating school provision. It now provides a good balance between supporting the school and asking searching questions about its performance. Governors have been assisted in this by effective training provided by the local authority.

Tracking procedures for monitoring children's progress have been strengthened. Procedures continue to be especially good in the Reception class and they have improved throughout the rest of the school. This has strengthened the school's ability to give appropriate support to pupils, reflecting their differing needs. The school has a great deal of data on pupils' progress but this is not yet sufficiently organised for quick and effective use by staff. There is now a need to streamline procedures to make their use simpler and more manageable for staff throughout the school, as well as to enable them to record and gauge pupils' progress in finer detail.

Teachers' marking is good throughout the school. This reflects the considerable amount of recent development work since the last inspection. Very effective marking was seen in all classes. Pupils receive regular and clear feedback, both orally and in writing. The teachers' comments are useful in helping pupils to improve. They are sharply focused on how well pupils meet the specific aims of particular items of work. At its best, the marking leads teachers to ask penetrating questions of pupils to encourage them to reflect on their work. Some older and abler pupils, after reading the teacher's comments, record their own responses. This indicates how well they have understood the points being made and, sometimes, what they would like to do to improve on them. More generally, teachers encourage pupils to think carefully about their marked work and what they need to do to improve it.

Although not identified as a key issue during the inspection, the lack of specialist provision for outdoor play in the Early Years Foundation Stage was noted. The school continues to cope well with this situation. Staff are rightly making plans to improve provision as and when funding becomes available.

Overall, much has been done to improve provision in recent months. Time is now needed for the school to consolidate and extend the development initiatives which it has set in train.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Toft

Her Majesty's Inspector