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Mrs S Harris  
The Headteacher  
Westfield School  
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Dear Mrs Harris

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 March 2009, 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 and local authority inspector who took the time to come and talk to me.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 March 2008, the school was asked to:

- analyse assessment data on pupils' progress more effectively
- provide more opportunities across the curriculum to develop basic skills
- ensure that information on pupils' previous learning fully informs planning.

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 nature of the pupils' difficulties means they are working well below national expectations. However, the school's performance data, observations of pupils working in lessons, and discussions with staff and pupils show that the pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, mathematics and science. The school has worked hard to introduce effective systems and procedures to analyse and ensure the reliability of assessment data. The headteacher now produces an annual calendar of assessment events and opportunities. This means that staff know when data needs to be collected and put into the system. There are regular opportunities for teachers to meet and to moderate their assessment decisions. Teachers are required to predict where pupils are likely to be at the end of each assessment period, usually a term. After the information is collected, the senior staff regularly chart the progress of all pupils in literacy, numeracy and science using a traffic light system to denote whether pupils are making the expected gains in learning. This information is formally fed back to teachers so that they can modify their lesson planning. The

school has gone some way to computerise its paper-based assessments to make the handling of data easier with a clearer presentation of the results.

The school has made a good start in intensively analysing its data in order to identify whether there is underachievement by any group, although there is not yet enough information within the system to be secure about any judgements. The work by the senior staff is having a good knock-on effect in the classroom, because teachers now have the latest information they require when planning their teaching. In lessons, most teachers use the information skilfully so that activities match up to the wide range of needs and capabilities within each class. In some lessons, activities are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for those with higher ability, and this slows down their progress. Most teachers are beginning to incorporate pupils' individual learning targets into their lesson planning. The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of these targets, and most, although not yet all are specific and measurable. Targets are currently set for the whole year and the school is correct in finding that it needs to set more useful, smaller steps for each pupil. The headteacher plans to revise the system this year to incorporate a half-termly review and revision of targets that also more fully involves the pupils where this is appropriate.

The school has introduced an effective themed approach to the curriculum. Each term, staff carefully map out the opportunities to develop skills in English, mathematics, science and the other subjects. Teachers use these termly maps as the basis for planning their lessons. Most teachers do this quite well and find that this cross-curricular approach provides an impetus for an imaginative range of classroom activities. However, there is not yet consistently good practice across all the classrooms. Lesson plans sometimes contain little guidance as to how the teacher intends to promote, say within a science lesson, communication, literacy, numeracy, or information and communication technology skills. (The headteacher, through her close monitoring, has already identified this shortcoming and plans to introduce a common format for lesson planning that contains all the necessary detail of cross-curricular opportunities, particularly in communication, as well as the pupils' individual learning targets.) The focus of next term's lesson observations will be the teachers' use of communication cues, such as signing and symbols, in every lesson. The local authority has given the school very good support by establishing a strong collaborative partnership with a special school rated as outstanding. It has also allocated an experienced School Improvement Partner, an attached inspector and an improvement adviser to assist the leadership team and governors.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee  
Additional Inspector