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Mrs A Foulkes
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Foulkes

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help that you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 May 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information that you provided before and during my visit. Please thank the chair of governors, staff and pupils for taking time to talk to me and helping with the inspection.

From September 2008 the school was led by an advisory headteacher following the departure of the substantive head in August 2008. The governing body appointed a new substantive headteacher who took up her post in April 2009. There has been some turbulence in teaching staff since the previous inspection: one teacher is on secondment, one has commenced maternity leave, and two other teachers have left the school. Due to difficulties in attracting experienced teaching staff, three newly qualified teachers were appointed on fixed term contracts. The local authority has funded two additional teaching assistant posts, to support the Year R/1 class and to support the high level of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Years 3, 4 and 5.

As a result of the inspection on 19 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement by ensuring that all teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress and use the information to plan work that is matched to each pupil's different capabilities
- develop teachers' subject leadership skills so that initiatives to raise standards and achievement are followed up with rigour
- help pupils to make better progress in lessons by making sure they all know what it is they are expected to learn rather than simply what tasks they are supposed to complete.



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 school's assessment information and inspection evidence show that there has been good progress in improving reading and satisfactory progress in improving writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are working at age appropriate levels is increasing, but standards in mathematics remain low.

Teachers' regular assessment and marking of pupils' work help pupils to know how well they have done, but does not always clearly identify what they should do next to improve or develop their work. Where good advice is given, it is not clear that pupils are given sufficient time or encouragement to act on that advice. Increasingly, assessment information is guiding teachers' planning and, in the best lessons, good planning ensures that tasks and support are tailored to the needs of different groups of pupils. The school is making good use of its assessment data to monitor pupil progress and set appropriately challenging targets for individual pupils.

Pupils are mostly keen to learn and teachers generally pitch their explanations and questions at about the right level to interest, support and challenge the pupils. Because of improvements to teaching most pupils now have a better understanding of what they are expected to learn. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not check sufficiently that pupils have understood exactly what is expected of them and some pupils are not confident enough to indicate that they do not understand. Consequently, pupils do not always use lesson time effectively and this limits their progress. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to develop success criteria so that they are able to demonstrate that they have met the learning objective. Consequently, in these lessons, pupils have a clearer understanding of what they are expected to learn and are enabled to assess their own progress towards the learning objective.

Governors are now better informed and more able to challenge the school and act as a critical friend. The role of the subject leaders has been strengthened and subject leaders are more accountable for standards achieved in their areas of responsibility. Leadership responsibilities are developing and subject leaders feel that they are well supported by the headteacher and representatives from the local authority. Although these developments are at an early stage, they are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards.

The local authority has revised its statement of action so that it provides a satisfactory framework for improvement, which is closely matched to the needs of the school. Intensive support from the local authority has been well received and the impact of the actions taken is most noticeable in improvements to teaching and the development of leadership at subject level.

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

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector

