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Mrs W Marriott
The Interim Headteacher
Cabot Primary School
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Dear Mrs Marriott

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 6 May 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please thank the pupils, staff, governors and the link school improvement officer who gave of their time to our discussions.

Since the last inspection the school has experienced a difficult time following an incident in June 2008, which received national media attention. This impacted on parental and staff confidence and the self-esteem of the pupils. Attendance rates for both staff and pupils were severely affected as were the perceptions of the local community to the school. The substantive headteacher went absent in October 2008 and resigned in November 2008. A local authority support plan and an interim senior leadership team, comprising of an advisory headteacher, an acting deputy headteacher and two associate governors, were put in place. All aspects and issues are now resolved and a substantive headteacher has been appointed to take up post in September 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 January 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards across the school through consistently good teaching that encourages pupils to work independently and assess how well they are doing
- ensure, through the sharing of good practice, that all teaching is up to the quality of the best
- improve literacy, numeracy and ICT skills by reinforcing their use in all subjects.



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.

In the national tests of 2008, standards at the end of Year 2 rose significantly and this is reflected in the current standards of work in Year 3 which are broadly as expected. Over time there has been an improving trend in standards at the end of Year 6 but, nevertheless, these still remain significantly below national averages. Current standards in Year 6 are well below expected levels but reflect a year group with a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose attainment was exceptionally low at the end of Year 2. Evidence from newly introduced pupil tracking systems shows that pupil progress is improving at a satisfactory rate and, in most year groups, good progress is being made in reading. However, there is a whole school awareness that the school needs to develop new strategies to make faster progress in writing.

In December 2008 the interim headteacher, in association with the link school improvement officer, monitored the teaching and learning and judged it to be inadequate overall. Since then there has been a considerable emphasis on the professional development of staff. Working in close partnership with the local authority and using the very high quality expertise of the school's own part time advanced skills teacher, there has been a sharp focus on improving the quality of learning. Strategies which ensure that the pupils are actively engaged in learning through discussions with their partners have been particularly successful. Staff are also becoming increasingly skilled in assessing the progress made by individuals. The new tracking systems highlight gaps in pupil progress and the information gathered from these is being used to inform teachers' planning. This is monitored by senior leaders who also scrutinise pupils' work to ensure that there is a consistent approach. Consequently, the school's most recent monitoring of teaching and learning in April 2009 reflects an improvement in classroom practice and it is now satisfactory overall.

In the past six months there has been an emphasis on providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. A whole school approach to planning topics has been introduced where key skills are promoted across the curriculum. For example, Year 1's gardening theme is being currently used to develop the pupils' literacy skills because pupils write about how to plant a bulb and create relevant captions. They also develop their numeracy skills when they spend money in their gardening centre and use their ICT skills when exploring the websites associated with this topic. A recent whole school themed week on 'Anansi' enabled all pupils to work on a cross curricular theme which focused on speaking skills and working together.

All staff and governors have taken a strong collaborative approach to school improvement and are working effectively as a team with the aim of accelerating academic progress.

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

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector