

Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01223 578500
Direct F 01223 578501
risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



16 July 2009

Headteacher
Spring Common School
American Lane
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE 29 1TQ

Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and the Chair of Governors gave when I inspected your school on 10 July, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 24–25 June 2008, the school was asked to ensure that

- the subject-based learning outcomes in lessons are firmly based on assessment information and tightly focused on the next step
- personal development targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are precise, so that the desired skills can be taught and practised in lessons and progress can be assessed and tracked
- in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a creative approach to the curriculum, better use of the outdoor area and information and communication technology (ICT), and a close match between children's needs and the provision for communication, language and literacy.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement. As a result of developments, the school has been successful in raising significantly the proportion of personal targets achieved by pupils, from 53% in 2007/08 to 84% in 2008/09. Students over 16 have achieved a wider range of accreditation this academic year and those in Year 11 have achieved a larger number of unit awards, although pupil numbers have remained the same.

Good improvements in assessment, planning and recording have helped to accelerate pupils' progress. All lesson plans contain clear subject-based learning outcomes, usually at three levels. These are derived from assessment information

obtained from a system that identifies small steps in all subject areas, and data is entered weekly by teaching assistants. In most primary classes subject planning is further personalised by identifying which of pupils' individual targets are being worked on and assessed during the lesson. The integrity of assessment information is assured during half-termly assessment weeks through internal moderation and the evidencing of pupils' achievement in pupils' personal folders.

Much training for staff in the writing of specific, measurable targets for individual education plans has had the desired impact. Almost all targets are now precise, realistic and achievable within the time-scale set. This is the result of rigorous monitoring. Consequently, a greater proportion of targets is being achieved. Although not all lesson plans identify those personal targets that pupils will be working on, teachers ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to work towards their individual goals. The school has a robust system for tracking pupils' progress, against agreed benchmarks, and any who do not make the progress expected of them are quickly identified and appropriate support is provided.

Good progress has been made in improving the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. A thematic approach to the curriculum, adapted to reflect children's interests and preferences, is being used effectively. The outdoor area has been developed well and is used daily to provide a range of learning experiences across all the areas of learning. Its use in conjunction with the adjacent indoor area enables children to move freely between both spaces and engage in a wide range of play activities. The outdoor area has been thoughtfully resourced so that equipment is accessible for children with mobility difficulties. There are now good opportunities for children to use ICT, including an interactive whiteboard, switches, laptops and electronic devices that assist communication. Support from a well trained higher level teaching assistant, who works with individual children, has ensured that all children soon develop a suitable means of communication, including signing, the use of pictures and symbols and the provision of electronic devices.

Good continuing support from the local authority has enabled the school to continue to devolve responsibilities to key members of staff so that monitoring and evaluation are now more widely distributed across the staff team. Training has empowered staff and the school has become more outward looking and able to share its practice with others.

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

Mrs S Aldridge
Additional Inspector