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Mrs D Martin
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Martin

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 November and for the information which you provided during my visit. Would you also thank the chair of governors for his time.

Since the last inspection four teachers have left, including two newly qualified teachers who had completed their induction year and one who did not. Four new teachers joined in September, of whom three are newly qualified. A consultant headteacher has been supporting school leaders for half a day per week. Four new governors have joined the governing body and five have left, with one vacancy currently unfilled.

As a result of the inspection on 5–6 March 2009, the school was asked to improve achievement in reading, writing and science; ensure greater rigour when monitoring the impact of its work and improve the way teachers use information about pupils' targets to identify the next steps in their learning.

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.

Lesson observations, work scrutiny and data analysis from this visit show that pupils are making better progress in reading, writing and science. The school is setting more challenging goals for pupils and is better focused on ensuring they achieve them. The improvements are reflected in the most recent national assessment tests taken by Year 6 pupils, where English and science results were higher than the year before. However, the improvements are not embedded and the progress of different year groups remains inconsistent. Weak basic literacy skills remain a key barrier to success. Pupils find it a challenge to discuss and extend ideas, but are beginning to do so and to write at greater length. The school has rightly identified that pupils



have not been achieving enough in mathematics and is giving this subject equal weighting in its drive for improvement. Here, too, progress is accelerating, although there is much to do to ensure pupils in all year groups make equally good progress. Pupils continue to have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons.

The school is more rigorous in setting measurable targets when planning improvements and checking the impact of its work. Development plans set out clearer goals for pupil achievement. The actions intended to bring about change are more closely linked to outcomes for pupils, although the benefits of some are still not clear enough. While long-term targets for achievement are more explicit, some lack sufficient milestones to provide early warning if progress toward them is too slow. Sensible adaptations are made to development priorities, such as improving achievement in mathematics, where additional needs are identified. Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science play a greater role in developing their areas. They use assessment information more effectively to check the pupils' progress and bring about improvements. The governing body is developing its capacity to monitor the school. Training on assessment data and better information from the school is enabling them to check more closely the progress of different groups of pupils.

Teachers are making better use of assessment information to plan lessons and identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science has been securely established, from which suitable targets are now set. Teachers make more use of this information to ensure lessons meet pupils' differing needs. More lessons have success criteria linked to pupils' targets. The best progress is made when these are discussed fully with pupils so they understand the purpose of their learning. Such discussions also enhance their speaking and listening skills. The pupils have a growing awareness of their individual targets, although there is considerable variability between subjects. Most can explain what they are trying to improve in English but are less clear about this in mathematics or science. The quality of marking is better, but here too inconsistencies persist in the extent to which pupils are expected to respond to comments or assess their own work. Pupils' progress over time is monitored more closely, including that of the large number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Intervention when progress is too slow has improved, for example through booster sessions.

The local authority provides satisfactory support and challenge for the school and its statement of action is fit for purpose. It recognises the need to build the school's capacity for improvement and the consultant headteacher is working effectively with senior school staff to support them in fulfilling their roles.

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

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector



Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies, the post-visit letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - chair of governors/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – except for academies
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.schools@dcf.gov.uk)
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools

A copy with editing marked up should be forwarded to the:
Lead inspector

