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Miss M Neale
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Dear Miss Neale

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 December 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please thank your chair of governors, the staff and pupils who contributed to the inspection.

The information you provided indicates that there has been much endeavour to improve the overall quality of provision and to create an integrated Early Years Foundation Stage Unit. However, there continues to be uncertainty about the position of substantive headship and the positions of acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are temporary appointments until the situation is resolved.

As a result of the inspection on 9 and 10 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise achievement and standards in English by improving writing, particularly for boys, at all stages of the school
- improve the levels of attendance by taking robust action to reduce absence
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by improving planning, marking and assessment
- increase the effectiveness of subject leaders by making sure they have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the strategies used to raise achievement and standards in their areas.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress overall in making improvements. However, outstanding progress has been made in improving levels of pupil attendance and good progress is evident in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Despite improvement in several other areas, the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory due to the remaining uncertainties in school leadership.



Good or better teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and standards overall are improving. Analysis of the latest data confirms a trend of improvement, with particularly good performance in mathematics. Performance in English has improved to reach broadly average levels. Lesson observations across the school confirm that pupils make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for writing. They respond well to better marking and the newly introduced structures for them to assess their own work. The effective implementation of strategies to encourage boys to write at length is narrowing the gap in achievement between boys and girls. Discussions with boys in several lessons confirm that they now enjoy literacy lessons and talk excitedly about the stories that enthuse them. However, the quality of written work is still variable at the end of Key Stage 2. Good examples of pupils writing for different purposes are evident but often punctuation, spellings and presentation are inaccurate. This limits the ability of all pupils to reach higher levels of performance. Progress on this key issue is satisfactory.

Pupil attendance has risen rapidly to average levels. This excellent progress is a direct result of the sustained application of highly effective monitoring procedures, detailed analysis of data and increased levels of communication between the school and parents of pupils who are persistently absent. Discussions with pupils confirm that they enjoy coming to school because they are rewarded for good attendance, that teachers make learning interesting for them and provide good opportunities for them to work with their friends. The improving outcomes for pupils fully reflect this better attendance.

Good progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The observation of consistently good or better teaching during the visit is a result of rigorous monitoring by school leadership. Scrutiny of documents confirms that this monitoring is regular and clearly focused on pupils' learning. Planning is thorough and teachers have continued to develop their skills in assessing the progress of pupils. Progress data is gathered regularly and used well to identify potential underachievement and set challenging targets. The quality of marking is good because teachers regularly praise pupils for their efforts and give clear guidance to them on what they need to do next to improve. Teachers make good use of this information to set clear targets for pupils to work at in literacy and numeracy. Pupils find these helpful and make good reference to them when completing their work.

A culture of improvement is clearly evident where all staff contribute to the creation of a positive climate for learning. Progress in developing the monitoring role of those with subject responsibility is satisfactory. Clear procedures support effective delegation of duties to staff with subject leadership duties. Some are new to their role and have not had time to effectively monitor standards in their subjects. However, good leadership of English and mathematics is leading to recognisable improvements in provision and pupil outcomes. Governance is satisfactory where individual governors are beginning to play a greater role in school improvement and



self-evaluation. Furthermore, good levels of support are provided by local authority and other professionals to develop teachers' skills and support school management.

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

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector