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Mrs Caroline Reynolds  
Headteacher  
Compass Point: South Street School and Children's Centre  
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Dear Mrs Reynolds

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 December 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am particularly grateful to the deputy headteacher, members of staff, the chair of governors and pupils for the discussions I had with them. Please pass on my thanks to them and to the rest of the staff and the pupils.

Since the previous inspection, the school has been more settled with regard to staffing but there has been some change in the responsibilities for teachers, including mathematics and assessment. The school has continued to develop its role as a children's centre and there has been an increase in its roll, particularly in the younger age groups. The school development plan shows a focus on the improvement of achievement generally and mathematics in particular, together with the development of assessment and progress tracking; this last aspect has been supported by the local authority. The school feels that this support has been effective in developing a robust system for assessment.

As a result of the inspection on 4–5 December 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in mathematics by improving pupils' skills in calculation and understanding of how to use and apply their knowledge of number
- make effective use of information on pupils' levels of attainment to ensure that activities are adapted to meet the wide range of needs in each class
- develop a range of strategies to engage pupils, particularly boys, in the introductory parts of lessons so that teachers can assess their understanding.



Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time, the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

There is a clear commitment across the school to raise the achievement of pupils and this is seen in the work of senior leaders, governors and the enthusiasm of the newly appointed mathematics coordinator. The results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2009 show an improvement in English, mathematics and science over the previous year. However, whilst results in English and science are broadly in line with national averages, the outcomes for mathematics remain below, although this still represents an improvement on previous years. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows they use a reasonably appropriate range of calculation strategies in their work. In lessons, they are encouraged to discuss their strategies for applying their mathematical knowledge when solving problems. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics because 'it's fun and we now have more things to do'. The development of the new progress tracking system is beginning to raise teachers' expectations, leading to greater understanding of individual learners' specific needs in mathematics.

The new assessment coordinator, working with the headteacher and supported by the local authority, has developed an appropriate progress tracking system. This is beginning to develop teachers' confidence in assessing the progress made by pupils and raising their expectations for further learning. The system is also used by senior leaders to hold staff to account for the progress made by pupils, at regular meetings throughout the school year. The tracking system does show an improvement in achievement since the last inspection, but this is less marked in mathematics than in reading and writing. Marking of pupils' work is regular, with some excellent examples of comments which note specifically how pupils can improve their work, particularly in the literacy books for older pupils. However, this is less apparent in pupils' mathematics books and marking is less effective in this subject. Mathematics books have self-assessment sheets attached but these are currently unused and pupils are unsure of their purpose.

The school has worked hard on developing a curriculum that, whilst appropriate for all pupils, will particularly interest boys. This term, the whole-school topic is about dinosaurs and it was clear that this topic was popular with all pupils, but especially boys. Appropriate learning activities are developed to reinforce understanding. An example of this was in a Year 2 class where a group of boys were role-playing at being 'archaeologists', using the correct equipment and terms for the 'fossils' that they unearthed. They were well supported and thoroughly enjoyed this activity that developed their language skills. This was extended by the opportunity to guide younger pupils through the process and discuss their discoveries. During the introductory sections of the lessons observed, teachers used questioning satisfactorily to assess the understanding of pupils, generally asking questions equally of boys and girls. In one literacy lesson, the work of one boy was used effectively to demonstrate descriptive sentences following study of the work of Roald Dahl. This raised the pupil's self-esteem as well as modelling an example of good



work for the boys in the class. Generally the lessons observed showed appropriate pace and challenge which enabled the learning to move forward. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 4 and 5 pupils enjoyed the challenge of completing multiplication table grids against the clock, trying to beat their previous times. Consideration of this activity showed that pupils were reasonably successful at this task, although some struggled with certain tables and number bonds. The teacher used this time effectively by developing focused work with a group, thereby developing a greater understanding of their 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

Robert Pyner  
Her Majesty's Inspector

