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Mrs Ita King
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Dear Mrs King

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 October 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils and governor that spoke to me.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- make teaching consistently good by ensuring that assessment is used more carefully in all classes to match work more accurately to pupils' abilities and their specific needs
- develop more fully pupils' speaking skills
- improve the curriculum by encouraging more research and collaborative learning.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

satisfactory progress in making improvements.

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In 2009, the Key Stage 2 results show improvement in English and mathematics, bringing them to broadly average. Attainment in writing rose substantially. The Key Stage 1 results show improvements in reading and that all pupils attained the expected level or above in mathematics, while writing standards remained just below average. At the end of Reception, attainment has risen substantially in creative development and social development, bringing it to the national average. It has also risen in numbers and calculating, where it is above average, and in reading. It has fallen in other areas of communication, language and literacy, and personal, social

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and emotional development, where it is below average. The school's records show that pupils join the school with attainment below age-related expectations and rapidly build on this. In most year groups, pupils are making the progress required to bring them up to expected levels of attainment, but there is still some way to go for the current Year 5 and 6 pupils to reach this standard, particularly in writing and mathematics.

The school has set in place appropriate systems to bring about improvement in the areas identified at the last inspection. It has prioritised these, so there has been more time for impact in some areas than others.

The school has made a concerted effort to raise standards in speaking and listening across all year groups. Teachers are planning more opportunities for speaking and listening in their lessons. Pupils are spending more time discussing in pairs and explaining their work to the class. As a result, their speaking and listening skills are improving. In lessons observed, staff worked hard to involve pupils in speaking and to focus them on listening and responding. They were careful to model accurate use of language and to correct pupils' errors.

Last year, the school ran a trial of a new approach to assessing pupils' progress based on a wider range of evidence than previously used. Building on this, the school has expanded the system to writing and mathematics for all pupils this year and recently provided training for staff. It has also improved its assessment of extended writing. Lesson plans include more detailed annotation to match work increasingly closely to individual needs, based on evaluation of previous learning. Nevertheless, lessons are not always sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Sometimes pupils do not have enough time to work on activities that meet their needs, because the work set is too easy or they spend too long listening. Senior leaders judge that teaching quality is improving and has many good elements but is not consistently good. Lesson observation and evidence from pupils bear this out. The performance management system for the coming year has a sharper focus on improving teaching quality.

Having given priority to the other key issues, the school has recently begun to involve pupils more in research and collaborative learning. Last term, pupils worked on the first of a planned series of topics. Teachers now include time in some lessons for pupils to do research using information and communication technology (ICT) or books. The school has plans to develop these opportunities further, including through use of the library for research during lessons. In a lesson observed, pupils were working well with ICT in pairs, developing skills in finding and interpreting information while studying the Second World War.

The school is developing its capacity to improve. Its evaluation rightly identified writing as an area for improvement, and hence this became a focus within its development plan. Its appropriate actions effectively raised Year 6 attainment in 2009 and are contributing to raising the standards in other years. The school's

efforts to increase attendance have also been successful. The school development plan includes appropriate actions, but their intended impact is not always expressed in a clearly measurable way. It does not contain actions specifically aimed at increasing research and collaborative learning. Governors are not given an explicit report on progress on each of the key issues raised at the last inspection, which would help them to play a fuller part in improvement through developing their supportive role into a more challenging one. Leadership is now more effectively distributed; the co-ordinators for literacy and assessment, which are key areas for development, take a more active role in evaluation and training. Staff work together well, with a shared drive to bring about improvement; they showed important strengths for achieving this through evaluating their own teaching perceptively. The tracking system identifies well pupils' progress against targets and leads to effective intervention for those falling below national expectations. The impact of family learning on promoting greater parental involvement in pupils' learning at home has contributed to improvements, particularly in literacy. This increasingly effective programme starts with parents when their children join the Early Years Foundation Stage; its first cohort of parents now have children in Year 3.

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

Gill Close
Her Majesty's Inspector