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Sandra Lewis
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Dear Sandra Lewis

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 October 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 8-9 December 2008 the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of teaching to ensure the needs of all pupils are consistently met
- improve the quality of assessment and its impact on pupils' learning
- ensure managers at all levels develop the skills to enable effective monitoring of provision in order to raise standards.

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

Pupils' achievement has greatly improved in the 10 months since the previous inspection. Last year's Year 2 cohort achieved standards which were in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents better than expected achievement, as at the time of the previous inspection, a large number of these pupils were not on track to reach these expected levels. The current Year 2 cohort are on course to meet their more challenging targets, with most pupils expected to reach above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. This represents good progress given their lower than expected starting points on entry into the Reception classes. There are a number of factors contributing to this improved achievement. Assessments, moderated by the local authority, of attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and at the end of Year 2 show that the school is now much more accurate in forming judgements against national criteria. This more rigorous and accurate assessment

has enabled the school to pinpoint specific areas of support to those pupils who need it most. Whole-school initiatives, such as the embedding of letters and sounds to teach phonics systematically at the start of every day, is having a positive impact on raising standards in reading and writing. The introduction of reading recovery and additional literacy support, alongside a better match of work to individual pupils' needs in lessons are all having a positive impact on moving pupils on in their learning. Individual targets are set for pupils and these are regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Whole-school curriculum evenings, for example, on the teaching of phonics have proved popular with parents, who are keen to support their children's learning at home. This has also helped to raise standards.

There is a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of what is going on in lessons. The senior leadership team has been reorganised since the last inspection and teaching and learning are regularly reviewed. These observations are fed back to individual teachers and as a consequence, teaching and learning are of a higher quality. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can learn, and the standards which they are capable of reaching. In most lessons, learning objectives are clearly defined and shared with the pupils so that they too are aware of what they are doing and why. However, this is not consistent and in these lessons, progress is not as rapid. Pupils' progress is consistently tracked across the whole school. This in turn feeds into the planning of the next steps pupils need to learn in order to move them on in their learning. This more consistent approach to assessment is having a positive impact on enabling pupils to achieve better.

Managers at all levels are developing the skills to monitor provision effectively in order to raise standards. The senior leadership team has been restructured and as a consequence, there are phase leaders and a member of the senior team across each year group. Teachers plan and work closely together and the introduction of team teaching to support weaker teachers is helping to raise expectations. Many members of the governing body are new, and although at the time of the monitoring visit, none was available to meet the inspector, minutes of meetings show that they are also more rigorous in their discussions. Safeguarding procedures at the school are thorough. At the time of the inspection, all adults who come into regular contact with pupils had been suitably checked. The school's work with partner agencies to support and protect vulnerable pupils is good. The local authority involvement in supporting the school in moving forward has also been good. The school's self-evaluation is good and accurate in its review of what needs to be done to improve. The good progress which the school has made in the three key issues since the last inspection demonstrates that it has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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
Sue Vale
Additional Inspector