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8 December 2009

Ms Bronwen Kucharski
The Headteacher
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Dear Ms Kucharski

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 November 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions, and for the information you provided. Please thank the staff, pupils and governors who gave up their time to talk to me. Since the last inspection you have some new staff including four newly qualified teachers.

As a result of the inspection on 19 and 20 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- make sure pupils achieved more and reached their challenging targets in English, mathematics and science
- improve the consistency in the delivery of the curriculum and the quality of teaching including challenging the most able
- ensure all teachers had consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate
- make sure that leaders at all levels are involved in monitoring the new systems and that this leads to better pupil progress and learning.

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

Results in all three subjects show an improving trend. Although in 2009 Year 6 pupils' results were still significantly below national expectations, pupils came closer to meeting their challenging targets than pupils in previous years. They began to catch up, but were unable to fully overcome the legacy of their poor progress whilst in Years 3 and 4. Your rigorous system of monitoring pupil progress now ensures that pupils make the expected amount of progress each year and far fewer pupils fall behind. Those that do receive prompt extra support to catch up.



The reorganisation to ensure there is staff expertise in each year group has had a good impact. The development of the curriculum is seen as a joint enterprise by each team and subjects are more consistently delivered across the three classes in each year group. The new 'calculation' policy is a good example of this. Staff have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and make sure that lessons are well matched to the needs of pupils of all ability levels. No group of pupils is disadvantaged and the redeployment of teaching assistants has further supported pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is improving. Over half of the lessons seen were good and the rest are solidly satisfactory. Prompt action is taken to support any teacher experiencing difficulty, due to the good monitoring by senior staff. This is important as newly qualified teachers grapple with the complexity of the wide range of abilities in their classes. Good lessons were observed in all three subjects that you were asked to improve. These were characterised by precise teacher introductions and a good pace of activity. In the satisfactory lessons the introductions included too much repetition and the rate of pupils' independent work was still too leisurely to drive rapid progress. Overall, teaching is increasingly challenging the most able pupils. Good teaching of higher ability pupils was observed, particularly in Year 5 mathematics. Staff ensure that pupils are very clear about expectations for behaviour and pupils say it has improved. They think the detention system is fair and consistently applied. The dinner staff, pupil mediators and the learning mentor all help make the school a pleasant place with considerate well behaved pupils who require fewer sanctions.

Leaders at all levels are increasingly involved in monitoring the new systems. You, your leadership team and the governors have well judged improvement plans, based on accurate self-assessment, that are being implemented effectively. Leadership is clear and decisive. You have rightly drawn on the local authority to help identify the factors slowing pupil progress and for support in improving teaching and learning. Given the growth in staff expertise the school is now ready to be more self-reliant. It has strong systems to check on the quality of teaching and pupil progress and, under the current leadership, has a good capacity to improve further. Governors support the school well; including checking on the good safeguarding procedures. Pupils respond well to the raised expectations. They take pride in their classrooms and the school garden. They enjoy more exciting activities, such as observing 'how a real baby grows and develops'. This is just one example of how pupils increasingly delight in the world around them and have begun to realise that with effort they can achieve even more.

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

Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

