

15 January 2010

Mrs J Purcell  
Southmead Primary School  
Princes Way  
Wimbledon Common  
SW19 6QT

Dear Mrs Purcell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 December 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please thank the pupils and staff who gave their time to the discussions.

Since the last inspection a new Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has been appointed, a resource base for autistic pupils has been established and the use of assessment data to track pupils' progress has been refined.

As a result of the inspection on 2 and 3 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement in English and science
- make better use of assessment to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils
- develop the roles of subject leaders particularly in relation to monitoring achievement and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

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.

At the time of the last inspection standards were well-below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In 2009 attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was broadly average in mathematics and science but remained well-below average in English. The introduction of an assessment policy in science and more effective teaching of investigative skills have raised standards significantly. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 show some improvement but remain below average in reading and mathematics.

The rate of progress made by pupils varies year on year and between groups. Turbulence in staffing, significant changes to the school population and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the past led to gaps in the knowledge



and understanding of pupils moving between phases. Working in close partnership with the local authority and using the expertise of consultants, senior leaders have introduced strategies to accelerate the progress of all pupils. A designated resource base opened in September 2009 to provide specialist support for the most severely autistic pupils. Current tracking data show that these pupils are making good progress. Consistent and accurate use of assessment data across the school to track pupil progress identifies where there is risk of underachievement for individuals and groups. This is followed up by extensive intervention for targeted pupils. Senior leaders hold regular meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of pupils in each class to increase accountability and embed a stronger focus on achievement. The introduction of single-age group classes has allowed teachers to plan work more effectively.

Teaching and learning are not yet consistently good across the school. This variability slows pupils' progress especially when the pace of learning does not match their differing abilities. Pupils make good progress in lessons where teacher expectations are high and teaching assistants are deployed to move pupils' learning on as well as providing the teacher with support. A programme of lesson observations and monitoring by middle leaders is being used well to improve the consistency of teaching and learning. Coaching and mentoring are being used effectively by senior leaders to support teachers where there is a need to improve performance. The school recognises that there is more work to be done to make sure that all pupils are provided with activities that consistently challenge them and that pupils clearly understand what they need to do to improve to reach their targets.

The headteacher has an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. She has worked effectively with external partners to introduce an ethos that places a high priority on professional development and accountability. The school is in a satisfactory position to sustain improvement because the links between self-evaluation and strategic planning are more clearly understood at all levels of leadership and management. The appointment of an able Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, working closely with the Key Stage 1 coordinator, has strengthened the capacity of middle leadership. Observation of children's learning indicates that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a sound foundation in learning and developing the skills required for the transition to Key Stage 1. Middle managers have received a significant amount of support and advice, and are developing the necessary skills to take ownership of their areas of responsibility. They express confidence in the changes made and demonstrate their commitment to make them work.

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

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector

