

24 March 2010

Mr J Hodgkins
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Dear Mr Hodgkins

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave Joy Law HMI and me when we inspected your school on 23 March 2010 and for the information which you provided during our visit. We also welcomed the opportunity to talk with other members of staff, pupils, governors and the School Improvement Partner. Please pass on our thanks to all those involved.

As a result of the inspection on 25–26 June 2009, the school was asked to:

- ensure as a matter of urgency that all statutory duties relating to safeguarding are met and that procedures are up-to-date and effective
- ensure that the impact of the school's provision, particularly on standards and achievement, is rigorously monitored to enable more focused and faster improvement
- improve the quality of teaching so that it leads to consistently good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1 and for more-able pupils in mathematics
- improve the promotion of community cohesion through more rigorous planning that is informed by regular evaluation of its impact
- develop the curriculum so that it is more exciting and stimulating in order to engage all pupils in their learning.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has been expanded to include an assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning, and phase leaders for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Changes have been made to staffing and the organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Considerable improvements have been made to the learning environment, including a new information and communication technology suite, better learning support areas for individual and group work with pupils, improved preparation and resource areas for teachers and individual access created for each classroom.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. In 2009, the majority of children made good progress in the Reception Year in most areas of their learning to enter Key Stage 1 working at above the expected levels for their age group. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attained below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics because they did not make enough progress. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attained broadly average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. This represents satisfactory progress overall from the pupils' starting points in Year 1.

In the current academic year, carefully thought through actions are having a positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. The school's latest assessment data indicate that in Key Stage 2, pupils are now making better progress in mathematics in particular. The increased challenge provided for more-able pupils looks set to increase the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels. In Key Stage 1, current Year 2 pupils are expected to achieve broadly average standards; an improvement on previous years. This indicates that pupils' progress is gathering pace, standards are beginning to rise steadily and the variability and underperformance identified in Key Stage 1 in the previous inspection is being eradicated as a result of the effective actions implemented so far.

The school now meets statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding. An up-to-date single central record of staff is in place. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and this is kept firmly on the agenda as a standing item for all meetings. Staff and designated governors have completed recent and appropriate training. Procedures, such as that for recording and reporting accidents, are robust. A comprehensive range of good quality policies, ratified by the governing body, are in place. Parents can access the key policies and procedures through the school website and are kept informed of any updates through the weekly newsletter. Half-termly questionnaires for pupils test out their views about the extent to which pupils feel safe and help to identify any further actions the school might need to take as a result. Staff respond quickly and effectively to any worries pupils may raise through 'circle' time and the 'talk-box', for example. Pupils' behaviour is good and they report that they are safe, happy and their views are listened to and taken seriously. Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety too through whole-school activities, such as projects on local road safety, opening and locking the school gates



under the supervision of the caretaker and acting as playground supervisors/buddies.

The expansion of the senior leadership team with effect from September 2009 has increased the capacity for improvement significantly. School leaders provide a clear vision and strong direction. They have put in place robust plans and taken the right actions to ensure teachers are equipped with the skills and resources they need to do their job effectively. School plans and assessment and monitoring systems in place from the start of this academic year are straightforward, easy to understand and have a very sharp focus on improvement. They are used routinely and to good effect as part of a range of review and evaluation activities.

Regular performance management discussions take place individually and collectively. Teachers and teaching assistants report being well supported as the new systems have been introduced. They have forged stronger links as the changes have been implemented and a clearer understanding of their complementary roles has emerged. This has enabled them to work much more closely together to plan individual support and interventions for pupils who need additional support or extra challenge. All of these actions ensure that new learning builds more effectively on previous knowledge and skills. Pupils' progress in lessons is accelerating as a result.

Changes to staffing in Key Stage 1 have resulted in teaching in this phase that is now generally good. The proportion of good or better lessons throughout the school is steadily increasing. A strong focus on improving mathematics has been maintained throughout the school, especially in Key Stage 2. Here pupils are being grouped together by ability rather than age and this, alongside additional booster classes and after-school sessions in thinking and reasoning skills for more-able pupils, is noticeably accelerating learning and enhancing the pupils' self-confidence and enjoyment.

The curriculum is now planned to meet the requirements of children in each key phase and also builds in opportunities for whole-school themed activities. This ensures a good range of appropriate and interesting age-related activities are in place. Recent topics have included the great fire of London, mask making, world book day, the ancient world and the Victorians. High quality displays of pupils' work around the school reinforce pupils' learning and achievements. The range of after-school activities and trips and visits has been increased. These cater for a wide range of interests and are well attended.

A thorough evaluation of the school's contribution to community cohesion has been undertaken. This has resulted in an appropriate policy and an effective plan that clearly indicates how the school intends to develop and fulfil its community cohesion function within and beyond the school. Governors are fully aware of the implications and requirements this has for them. There is a strong sense of community within the school and pupils are actively encouraged to help each other and make a contribution through the buddy system and monitor roles, for example. Pupils are



being provided with more opportunities to engage in activities that help them understand their own community and the ethnic, social and economic characteristics of other local, national and global communities. For instance, through collective worship, active links with a partner school in a very different community and themed curriculum activities based around Diwali and Eid, Africa, China and Poland and fund raising for children in Haiti.

The local authority statement of action meets requirements. Support from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner has been good and highly effective in helping the school implement the actions needed to tackle the areas for 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

Wendy Ripley
Her Majesty's Inspector