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Mrs James
Bramley Vale Primary School
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Dear Mrs James

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Would you please pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils and particularly the members of the school parliament. Since the last inspection a newly qualified teacher and two new governors have been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 9-10 December 2008, the school was asked to

- raise achievement and standards in writing for all pupils at Key Stage 2
- ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work through more rigorous assessment and marking.
- raise pupils' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity.

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

- in making improvements and
- in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In 2009 overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved for English and mathematics but it remains below national averages. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved and is now just below national averages. In both key stages the attainment of pupils with special educational needs has improved. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils who are on school action plus have attained better than the national averages for English and mathematics. Pupils who are receive free school meals attain in line with the national average. The variations in attainment from year to year are partly because of the small numbers of pupils involved; in some groups



one pupil represents over 4% of the group and therefore can make a considerable difference to the results. The school carefully tracks pupils' progress and acts on its analysis of information well with appropriate interventions to support pupils' learning.

Learning is now good overall. Pupils said they enjoy learning. The school sets high expectations for all pupils. Work is carefully structured to support and challenge all groups of pupils to do their best. Teachers' questioning helped pupils to explain their thinking, as a result teachers were able to respond quickly to emerging learning needs. Pupils were given plenty of opportunities to practise activities and discuss their learning with a partner. This encouraged and developed well their independent approaches to work. Occasionally teachers still talked for too long which slowed down learning. They are aware of this.

Pupils' writing has improved. Teachers have made effective use of the support they have received. Well thought through activities have extended and enhanced pupils' opportunities for writing. Pupils take great care in the presentation of their work and make good use of the range of strategies they have been taught. For example one pupil was accurately practising breaking down the sound of a word to spell it. In another lesson a boy said how much he liked writing. The teaching of phonics has been extended throughout the school. The school library has been refurbished and restocked. The need for improved speaking and listening has been identified and strategies put in place to encourage pupils to talk about their learning. Teaching assistants make careful and well thought out interventions which ensure that pupils are well engaged in activities and make expected progress.

The school has updated its marking policy. The senior team monitor this carefully to ensure consistency. Teachers' planning identifies opportunities for assessment. Books are marked in line with the school's policy and written comments reinforce the oral feedback which pupils receive. Pupils are given clear guidance on the next steps for their learning, but opportunities are not always provided for pupils to attempt these in their next piece of work. Pupils are beginning to mark each others' work. This is done with careful thought. Pupils said how much they valued this and how it helped them improve their work. The school's parliament has usefully carried out a 'learning walk' and members have talked to all pupils about their learning and how teachers can help them further.

The school has improved pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. There are now plenty of opportunities for visits and multicultural experiences from drumming and dancing to visiting local Mosques, making Diva lamps and taking part in a European Day of languages. The pupils have also made a world calendar. A multicultural element appropriately informs the curriculum with activities linked to the 'whole world's a stage'. The school has a link with a junior school in London and a visit is planned for later in the year. Pupils in both schools are now emailing each other. The school is in the early stages of linking with a junior school in Gambia. Parents who have contacts abroad have been invited to help develop cultural awareness.

The headteacher has acted with determination to raise standards and, in particular, to improve pupils' writing and cultural awareness. The senior team have ensured that the work of external consultants has had a significant impact in developing the teaching of writing. Monitoring is rigorous and enables staff to understand what constitutes a good lesson. Observations of teaching and learning have ensured that support aimed at improving writing has benefited the whole staff. Good quality feedback has helped teachers implement advice. Teachers improve their planning in light of their reflection on practice. However, opportunities have been missed to evaluate how well pupils consolidate their learning and benefit in other ways from oral feedback from teachers in lessons.

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

Michelle Parker

Her Majesty's Inspector/ Additional Inspector