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Mrs E Heaphy  
Cherry Tree Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Heaphy

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 September – 1 October 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, parents, governors, local authority representatives and the independent consultant for their help during the inspection.

Since the last inspection, several teachers have left the school. As a result, there is a new subject-leader for mathematics and five teachers are newly qualified. You have therefore strengthened the induction programme for new staff.

As a result of the inspection on 29-30 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards by ensuring that the new skills to be taught in each lesson are clearly identified and taught systematically.
- Make sure that all groups of pupils, especially the more able, are appropriately challenged and are fully extended so that they attain higher standards.
- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress in each year group, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

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.



During my visit, the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in lessons was mostly satisfactory and occasionally good. Pupils' attendance and behaviour is satisfactory and the level of persistent absence is well below average. They join in with organised games such as football and basketball at lunchtimes, helping them to stay healthy.

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, but standards are still well below average when they are assessed at the end of Year 2. This is because many pupils are still at a very early stage of development when they join the school in the nursery or reception classes. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved steadily in recent years. Standards are now average in English, but still well below average in mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

The school is enhancing its capacity for improvement by learning from its areas of success. For example, close teamwork has contributed to improvements in the Foundation Stage. Subsequently, you have introduced a new structure of four staff teams, covering the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 lower and Key Stage 2 upper. There is evidence that programmes of individual support and coaching from team colleagues have helped teachers to increase the proportion of good lessons. The school has introduced an 'Impact Learning Programme' with good support from an independent consultant. The local authority is adapting its own programme of support so that teachers receive consistent guidance.

The school has had partial success in addressing the areas for improvement indicated in its last inspection report. The 'Big Write' strategy for improving the quality of writing has led to significant improvement in literacy in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in English at age 11 rose from 58% in 2007 to 67% in 2008, and provisional results indicate a further sharp increase in 2009. However, there has been little improvement in mathematics.

Following the success of the 'Big Write' programme in English, the school is developing a similar approach in mathematics, though it is still at an early stage. At present, , pupils' work in mathematics does not show a clear enough progression from Year 3 to Year 6. Lesson planning does not take enough account of pupils' different needs. Teachers do not always have the subject expertise to choose the most effective approaches for different topics or to set exercises that will help them to diagnose pupils' specific difficulties.

The school leaders, governors and the local authority all recognise the urgent need to improve progress in mathematics. We discussed how the school might achieve this by developing a more detailed improvement plan for mathematics, with more direct involvement from the senior team. The local authority has offered the support of a mathematics consultant who knows the school well.

The school improvement plan naturally focuses on improving teaching and learning, but it also seeks to improve communication with parents. This recognises the value of engaging parents in the learning process and helping them to understand the school's behaviour policy. The school governors are playing an important role in this process.

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

Stephen Abbott  
Her Majesty's Inspector