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Miss S Paradalis
Limes Farm Junior School
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Dear Miss Paradalis

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 October at short notice and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please thank your chair of governors, the staff and the pupils who contributed to the inspection.

There have been some staff changes since the previous inspection and a substantive deputy headteacher is yet to be appointed. The playgrounds have been refurbished and they provide versatile areas for recreation for both the pupils and members of the local community.

As a result of the inspection on 22-23 September 2008, the school was asked to improve pupil attendance, ensure teaching is consistently good or better and develop teachers' skills of assessing pupils' progress so that the targets they set make clear to pupils exactly what they need to improve.

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.

Pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 2 remain below national averages overall. However, the most recent results indicate a trend of improvement, especially in mathematics and science. Lesson observations across the school confirm that pupils are making better progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are demonstrating an enthusiasm for writing and are responding well to better marking, setting of targets for improvement and the newly introduced structures for them to assess their own work. Pupils are also responding very well to greater opportunities for practical activity in science lessons where good achievement is resulting in average standards by the end of Year 6.



Pupil attendance has steadily risen to levels broadly similar to the national average. This good progress is a result of the sustained application of good monitoring procedures, detailed analysis of data and increased levels of communication between the school and parents of pupils with a poor attendance. Discussions with many pupils confirm that they enjoy coming to school because teachers link subjects together imaginatively to make lessons more interesting and creative. This improved level of attendance is now being reflected in improving outcomes for many pupils.

Progress in the improvement of teaching has been satisfactory. No inadequate teaching was evident during the monitoring visit but inconsistencies still remain. Teachers have responded well to support and training. In the several good lessons observed, activities were planned well and teachers used a range of strategies to provide effective steps for pupils to make in their learning. These good lessons provide pupils with many opportunities to develop their basic skills. However, some teachers have yet to apply these strategies consistently in all lessons to ensure that teaching is at least good or better across the school. In those lessons judged satisfactory overall, insufficient challenge is provided for the more able pupils, learning intentions lack clarity and opportunities are missed to use resources imaginatively to inspire pupils.

Teachers have made good progress to develop their skills in assessing the achievements of pupils. Progress data is gathered regularly and used effectively to identify potential underachievement and set challenging targets. The quality of marking is improving and teachers provide good levels of praise and clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve. Teachers make good use of this information to set clear targets for pupils to work at in literacy and numeracy. Pupils find these helpful and make good reference to them when completing their work.

School leadership has established a culture of improvement, where staff with management responsibility, take greater responsibility in taking the school forwards. Governance is satisfactory but the involvement of governors in school improvement and self-evaluation is limited. The school has generated a positive and creative climate for learning that is inspiring pupils. Pupil outcomes are improving but standards still remain below average overall because of some remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.

Good levels of support are provided by local authority and other professionals to develop teachers' skills to support school management.

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

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector