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Mrs Christine Thurgood
Headteacher
Pear Tree Mead Primary and Nursery School
Pear Tree Mead
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Dear Mrs Thurgood

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 December, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided during our visit. Please pass on my thanks to your staff and students for taking the time to speak to me.

As a result of the inspection on 10-11 December 2008, the school was asked to ensure that all staff work together to bring about a rapid improvement in standards, particularly in mathematics; share best practice to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, providing appropriate challenge for all pupils and making sure they know how to improve their work, and provide more opportunities for cultural development by enabling pupils to mix with children from different backgrounds.

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.

When pupils start Key Stage 1 they have achieved standards that are below the expected level for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 their standards remain below average in English and mathematics and science. In the most recent tests pupils reached standards that were in line with the national average for mathematics but below in English. Although attainment in reading was high for their age pupils' attainment in writing was below average. An increasing proportion of pupils have gone on to reach the highest possible level in reading at the end of Key Stage 2. In lessons seen, pupils



are making the expected level of progress in mathematics although there is some variation in Key Stage 2 where there has until recently been inconsistency in the quality of teaching.

Senior leaders have rightly focussed their attention on bringing about improvements in teaching. This has been achieved despite the fact that the senior leadership team has not been at full strength for much of the year. Teaching is now good. Senior and middle leaders monitor lessons closely and have provided support and training where it has been required. Leaders have not been afraid to make changes in staffing when this has been necessary. They have a very good awareness of the strengths and areas for development in literacy and numeracy.

In lessons learning objectives are regularly shared with pupils. Teachers and pupils have good relationships with each other. Behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of partner talk which enables all pupils to participate in discussions. Pupils are involved in marking their own work and that of their peers. In most lessons teachers plan well for the individual needs of pupils including those in the recently set up ability groups in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Pupils generally know how well they are doing and what their target for improvement is. Teaching assistants are deployed well to work with pupils at different levels of attainment. Not all are as effectively employed during carpet time. At times this is because some teachers spend too much time speaking to the whole class.

Marking is inconsistent. It is better in literacy than in numeracy. At its best it informs pupils about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. There are constructive comments for development or extension questions which are later followed up by teachers to ensure that the pupils have fully understood the concept. Procedures for assessment are not consistent across classes however.

The opportunities for pupils to experience greater cultural diversity are still at an early stage of development. A plan for community cohesion is in place and an audit of the current curriculum has taken place. Steps have been taken to establish links with schools where a majority of the children come from different backgrounds to those at Pear Tree Mead. This work has advanced at a steady pace but as yet there is little evidence of impact in children's work or displays.

All safeguarding procedures are in place and are rigorously monitored.

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

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector