

Serco
Boundary House
Wythall Green Way
Wythall
B47 6LW

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0121 683 2033
Ann.morris@serco.uk



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Paul Bannister
Captains Close Primary School
Saxelby Road
Asfordby
Melton Mowbray
Leics
LE14 3TU

Dear Paul Bannister

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 December 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Thank you also to the chair of governors who met me at such short notice.

Since the last inspection, one of the teachers at the school has gained an advanced skills teacher status.

As a result of the inspection on 7 October 2008, the school was asked to: raise standards, particularly in English and for the more able, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6; and ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable by providing a consistency of good quality teaching across the school.

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.

Children's skills when they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage are varied, but overall they are below those normally expected, especially in aspects of communication, language and literacy. Effective work has improved children's phonic skills and is beginning to bring about improvements in Year 1. The 2009 provisional results for pupils at the end of Year 2 indicate that attainment has risen since the previous year and is above, but not significantly different to, average. Pupils made at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. Provisional test results for pupils in Year 6 indicate an improving trend. Although the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in English remained the same as in 2008, more pupils attained the higher Level 5. Similar increases are evident in mathematics, reflecting the impact of greater challenge for the more able pupils, although there was a dip for these pupils in the science results from the previous year. Overall, pupils' achievement is



satisfactory. This is confirmed by the school's own detailed assessment and tracking data which also shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are making good progress, especially in reading. Improvement in writing has been identified accurately as needing to be accelerated.

The school has focused successfully on improving aspects of teaching. Its own monitoring indicates that inadequate teaching has been eradicated and this view was supported by my own observations. In the five lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory and often good progress. Tasks set were varied, mostly challenging and captured pupils' interest. Learning was suitably reinforced through good questioning and pupils were very happy to collaborate in pairs and small groups. There were promising signs of improving confidence and understanding from the pupils in the way they approached written tasks. Behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning were good.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection because of a stronger focus on using assessment to aid learning, led by the headteacher. There is a good understanding of current levels of pupils' progress and targeted interventions are carefully evaluated and adjusted to ensure pupils' underachievement is reversed. Marking is generally good and usually followed up with pupils to ensure improvement is sustained. There is an expectation that pupils will respond to comments when their work is marked. As a result, pupils know what they have to do to make their work better. Teaching assistants provide flexible and effective support for pupils with a wide range of needs.

The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and is supported well by middle leaders. The school sets challenging and realistic targets and has developed well-focused action plans to tackle areas of weakness. These have already brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and in the rigour of analysis of pupils' performance. The use of Assessing Pupils' Progress materials is helping in this regard and half termly reviews, using a pupil tracking system enables staff to direct suitable action to bring about further improvement. Senior and subject leaders carry out routine monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The headteacher keeps detailed records of lesson observations and teachers receive pertinent points for development. Governors visit the school regularly and increasingly review its progress more robustly. The local authority supports the school effectively through regular reviews of its performance. It is also enabling the headteacher and other staff to access consultant support to build capacity further. As this has been provided recently, it is too early to evaluate its impact.

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



Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

