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18 November 2009

Mr David Baldwin
Gooderstone CEVA Primary School
The Street
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Dear Mr Baldwin

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 November and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also thank your chair of governors for giving up his time to speak to me and to the pupils for their welcome and for their reflective comments.

At the time of the last inspection, a temporary local authority headteacher was leading the school on a part-time basis. The current, permanent headteacher took up his post in January 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 23 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise achievement in mathematics and writing by using assessment information and pupils' targets more effectively when planning lessons
- raise expectations for the achievement of the more able pupils by providing consistent challenge for them in lessons

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

Good progress in making improvements

and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Pupils work hard and say they enjoy lessons. They show interest in their work and contribute well to discussions. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment, shown by the 2009 test results and in pupils' work, is in line with national averages. This reflects good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009 remained too low in mathematics and the progress of Year 6 pupils in mathematics had been too slow throughout their time in Key Stage 2. However school data shows that rates of progress in mathematics are now improving. Both attainment and rates of progress in English and science are now in line with expectations.

Since taking up his appointment the headteacher has, with staff, taken concerted and effective action to drive improvement. He has successfully established not only a culture of shared leadership among staff, but also a strong learning culture and staff are all fully involved in this drive. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and identifying their next steps in learning have been introduced and developed well. Some aspects have been held up locally as best practice. Training for teachers and support staff has ensured that all staff involved in making assessments are using a consistent approach and moderation of pupils' work is taking place to ensure consistency in judgements regarding levels. Teachers are now using this information to tailor activities accurately in lessons to pupils' learning needs. Pupils know what they are expected to learn, although as yet they are not sufficiently involved in identifying the criteria for a successful piece of work and in evaluating their work against these criteria. Pupils know their targets and feel they help them in their work. Older pupils say that the new development in the form of 'target moons' is very motivating. The school is aware that the use of targets needs to be further refined and work is planned to review the target setting process.

This term the school has received very good support from the local authority which has added impetus to their action, and staff embrace this support. The staff's interest in improving their practice, together with more effective use of assessment, ongoing internal monitoring and external advice have resulted in an improving quality of teaching. Growing confidence in the use of data means that staff are accurately identifying those pupils who need additional interventions to make sure they do not fall behind. It also means that more able pupils are identified, and are now being given greater challenge in lessons with some pupils working with older pupils to accelerate their progress. The school is aware that there is still more work to do to make sure these more able pupils are given even higher challenges to aim for.

The headteacher is rightly acting as the gatekeeper to make sure that action is prioritised in this small school. Improving provision in mathematics is the key priority but work to improve provision in English is also taking place. The governing body has an accurate understanding of priorities and provides a good level of challenge. The action taken so far and the emerging evidence of impact, together with the effectiveness of future plans demonstrates an increase in the school's capacity to improve.

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

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector