

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 2048
Victoria.mortimore2@serco.com



11 December 2009

Jane Brothers
Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School
Kingsthorpe Grove
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN2 6NS

Dear Mrs Brothers

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass my thanks on to the staff and pupils for taking the time to talk to me.

Since the last inspection, under the governance of the school, Kingsthorpe Children's Centre has opened within the school's grounds. In April 2009, a large-scale building programme started. This has resulted in significant disruption. On a rolling programme, classes have been moved both off and within the site to allow for refurbishment. However, careful leadership and management have enabled a smooth, phased development which is due to be completed by May 2010. There has been an increase in the number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders attending the Designated Special Provision Unit.

Since September, there have been several staff changes. An assistant headteacher post has been covered internally by a senior member of staff. Additional mathematics and English leaders have been appointed to increase capacity across the key stages. The science leader is on maternity leave. This role is being covered by the former post holder. As a result, more staff are actively involved in school improvement.

Following the inspection on 9-10 December 2008, the school was asked to

- raise standards in writing and using and applying mathematics throughout the school and ensure that more opportunities are provided for pupils to use these skills in other subjects
- ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have more opportunities to develop their writing and number formation skills through structured play



- improve the quality of teaching, especially in Years 3 and 4, to ensure that information from assessment is rigorously used to plan the next steps of learning.

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.

You have worked closely with the school's senior leaders to establish a clear understanding about what the school needs to do to improve. Some staff have left and this has given you the opportunity to restructure and share leadership across the school. Having two subject leaders for both English and mathematics has helped to speed up improvements in the standard of writing and the use of 'real life' mathematics across the school.

You demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to eradicate inadequate teaching. Shortcomings identified through monitoring and evaluation activities have been addressed systematically and proportionately. New appointments have strengthened the quality of teaching. Where individual teachers need specific support, a targeted approach has been used to address their needs. The leadership team has begun to increase staff accountability for attainment and progress by setting up 'achievement groups' and holding pupil progress meetings.

Members of the leadership team have delivered appropriate writing training for the whole staff. This approach has been used effectively. For example, establishing an agreed approach to 'Big Writing' and providing helpful written and verbal feedback. The constructive guidance that pupils receive is contributing to the improved progress seen in writing throughout the school. The introduction of Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) has aided staff to help pupils take the next step to improve their work. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are beginning to self-evaluate and many are able to articulate their targets.

Detailed planning in the Foundation Stage provides opportunities for children to develop their writing and number formation skills. In Reception, children were eagerly practising their letters and sounds on the interactive whiteboard. Progress data show clear evidence that provision is beginning to have an impact on outcomes in communication skills, including writing. Support from the local authority has enabled the Foundation Stage practitioners to moderate the children's profile assessments and secure an accurate baseline as children start Year 1.

Despite a three year trend of improvement in pupils' progress, in 2009, there was a decline in attainment in the national assessments for pupils at Year 6. Mathematics and writing, particularly boys' writing, remain weaker. The school is aware that further work needs to be done to bring about improvements to attainment in English and mathematics. Senior leaders have already put in place appropriate actions to address these issues. The sound progress seen in most pupils' books indicate that the strategy is beginning to have an impact. The school is demonstrating that it is capable of addressing the shortcomings identified in the last inspection.

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

Linda Rockey

Her Majesty's Inspector