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Miss C Dunleavy  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Dunleavy

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, teachers and the governors I met, for their time.

Since the previous inspection there have been further changes to the staffing situation. Two classes are currently being taught by temporary staff to cover for maternity leave and another teacher has returned to school after taking maternity leave.

As a result of the inspection on 19 November 2009, the school was asked to:

- provide greater opportunities for pupils to write quickly and accurately across the curriculum
- ensure that work in science meets pupils' differing needs closely, especially for the more-able
- strengthen the role of subject leaders in ensuring that progress across subjects is more even.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made inadequate progress in making improvements but satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement. The school has introduced a range of initiatives intended to bring about the improvements identified as being necessary. However, while they are helping to improve the consistency of teaching quality across the school they have not yet made any discernible impact on pupils' outcomes.



The school's 2009 data shows pupils' attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 as being broadly in line with national averages. This information presents a mixed picture overall. This is because the Key Stage 1 results show a downward trend, whereas the Key Stage 2 results show an upturn in English and science but not in mathematics. When children begin school in the Reception Year, the vast majority do so with skills that are often in line with, or above, what might be expected. They make good progress and almost all reach, and many exceed, the levels expected for the start of Year 1. However, across Key Stages 1 and 2, the rate at which pupils make progress is uneven. As a result, too many pupils do not make enough progress and too few pupils reach the higher levels of which they are undoubtedly capable.

The quality of teaching seen during the monitoring visit was satisfactory overall. Subject leaders are starting to have a greater influence on improving the quality and consistency of lessons. For example, the introduction of a common planning format in science has strengthened teachers' understanding of how to plan a scientific investigation. Teachers are becoming more confident in their ability to assess pupils' work. This development is leading to more focused marking and better quality guidance about how pupils can rectify and learn from their mistakes. Strategies to improve the speed and quality of pupils' writing have been introduced across the school but, as yet, there is insufficient evidence to determine what impact they have had. In the lessons observed, pupils behaved well and showed positive attitudes towards learning. They are very motivated and keen to do well. The pace of lessons is satisfactory but, because too much time is often spent introducing lessons, opportunities for practical work are reduced. As a result, the progress pupils make is limited. Work is differentiated for pupils' differing needs, but not enough thought is given to ensuring that activities build and improve upon pupils' prior learning. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils, but there are times when teachers have not planned sufficiently for their practical involvement in the lesson.

The school's procedures for tracking pupils' progress are generally appropriate but they contain limited data, some of which is unreliable. This makes it difficult to analyse the information and monitor, with any accuracy, the progress pupils are achieving and identify any variations between different groups.

Subject leaders are starting to make a greater contribution to the school's leadership and management. Their roles have been defined with greater clarity and subject responsibilities allocated across the school. However, the recent changes to the staffing situation have required the school to redistribute the leadership of some subjects, which has limited the progress achieved so far. Some subject leaders have developed action plans setting out appropriate priorities for the current academic year but few include details of how their actions will improve pupils' outcomes. A few have also started to scrutinise pupils' books and teachers' planning to determine relevant strengths and areas to develop. Their ability to monitor developments in the classrooms has been restricted by a lack of time for leadership responsibilities. The recent development of linking governors to specific subjects has provided a useful



strategy and line of accountability for subject leaders to begin sharing information with the governing body.

The school's monitoring procedures are satisfactory and the leadership have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. The development plan set out appropriate actions to strengthen current practice. The criteria used to monitor and determine progress being achieved focus more on whether the expected initiatives have been implemented rather than judging impact on pupils' progress. The governing body's ability to hold the school to account is developing. There is a strong determination to improve their capability to analyse performance data so as to focus, more accurately, on the areas needing improving. During the visit the safeguarding procedures were checked and the school's central record was judged not to meet all the regulations.

As a result of the serious concerns I have about the limited progress achieved by the school, the uneven progress pupils make across Key Stages 1 and 2 and the fact that the central record was inadequate, I am recommending that a return visit is necessary.

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

Ken Buxton  
Her Majesty's Inspector

