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Mr Andrew Gallagher
Tower View Primary School
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Dear Mr Gallagher

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 December 2009, for the time you and your deputy headteachers gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the teaching, support and administrative staff, pupils and governors that I spoke to on what was an extremely busy day for the school.

As a result of the inspection on 25-26 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- put in place initiatives, particularly in reading and writing, to raise standards
- ensure that pupils know their next steps in learning so that teachers can use these targets when they mark pupils' work and involve pupils in checking on their own progress
- establish links between subjects, so that pupils have more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills.

Significant changes since the last inspection include:

- the appointment in April 2009 of a new headteacher
- extensive refurbishment work
- the appointment of two new teaching assistants
- Curriculum Teams established in September 2009.



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.

Attainment remains significantly below that found nationally. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2009 indicate that standards declined overall from the previous year. Although there was some improvement in reading, standards in both reading and writing were well below the national averages. In 2009, results of national tests at Key Stage 2 indicated some improvement in both reading and writing from the previous year, reflecting the school's focus on these aspects. Appropriate support strategies and programmes, for example, the introduction of 'Stories into Writing' and 'Big Writing' are beginning to support pupils effectively through improving their motivation and increasing their skills and knowledge. The school's assessment data shows that Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2010 are likely to improve on the standards achieved in 2009, to reach the school's challenging targets set for reading and writing. Although the data show that pupils in some classes are making good progress, overall, progress is satisfactory. The headteacher knows the strengths in teaching and learning and the areas requiring further development or improvement. His judgement that teaching is satisfactory overall is borne out by the inspection.

The school has made good progress in ensuring that pupils know the next steps in their learning. Through the Improving Schools Programme (ISP), the school has introduced the use of 'must, should, could' targets in lessons to aid learning. In the best practice, these are helping to increase pupils' rates of progress and provide a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve further. Some teachers are also engaged in developing ways in which pupils can be more involved in assessing their own work and identifying targets. However, although the system is consistent across classes, teachers' confidence in using the assessment information still varies. The school has implemented new policies for assessment and marking. The effective monitoring of these policies is ensuring that assessment information is beginning to be used successfully to identify underachievement in all ability groups. Some teachers are also using the outcomes of assessment to adjust lesson plans and set individual targets. The quality of marking is variable, with some of good quality, particularly in supporting pupils' 'Big Writing.' However, marking is not consistently supporting pupils' understanding of the next steps that they need to take to improve their work

The appointment of Curriculum Teams in September 2009 is having a positive effect on improving the quality of the curriculum because team leaders are providing clear and effective leadership. There is appropriate emphasis on teaching the basic skills through a cross-curricular approach. The curriculum is suitably modified to meet the learning needs of lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, more able pupils are too rarely provided with the additional challenge they need, or require to work independently, so they develop their



thinking and problem solving skills. The school is aware of the need to develop a more creative, rich and challenging curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are being used more widely to develop links between subjects. Although there is some effective use made of interactive white boards, this is not consistent throughout the school.

Reports show that the school benefits from the challenge and support received from the regular visits made by the local authority and school improvement partner.

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

Dorothy Bathgate

Her Majesty's Inspector

