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Miss A Champ
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Miss Champ

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 November 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils for their help during the inspection and to your Chair of Governors for taking time to meet me to discuss her view of the school's progress since the last inspection.

The number on roll is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Children continue to enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes that are well below those expected for their age. Provision for outdoor learning for Nursery and Reception children remains limited, although there are plans to improve this. Attendance continues to be well below the national average but is showing signs of improvement this term. There are comprehensive systems in place for monitoring and responding to pupils' absence and many positive rewards for those who achieve high attendance.

Significant changes in leadership and management arrangements have been introduced since the last inspection; these were confirmed by the governing body in July 2009. A federation partnership has been set up with another local primary school with an executive headteacher leading both schools. The senior leadership team includes the head of learning and teaching, who has responsibility for the day to day management at Shaw, a leading teacher responsible for staff professional development, an inclusion manager and phase leaders. Since the inspection, there have been changes in membership of the governing body and a new chair was elected at the beginning of November. The school has received a considerable amount of support from local authority consultants as part of the improving schools programme. This has been suitably focussed on improving provision and raising attainment in mathematics. Consultants have supported staff with writing a calculation policy and with the introduction of learning targets for pupils.



As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 November 2008, the school was asked to: raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics by extending the range of learning opportunities in the subject; build on existing good practice to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching; and, provide greater challenge for more able pupils through better use of assessment information.

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.

Teachers' assessments and national test results show that pupils' attainment in mathematics improved well in 2009. Many more pupils managed to reach the expected level in Year 2, with three quarters reaching Level 2b. In Year 6, there was a 20% increase in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and more pupils managed to achieve the higher Level 5. Although the targets set for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics were met, results in English were much lower than they were in 2008. Leaders acknowledge that a sharper focus is now required on raising attainment in English, particularly in writing. Ambitious targets have been set for Year 6 pupils in 2010 and current assessments indicate that pupils are some way from achieving these. Furthermore, teachers' assessments for the first half of this term show that the attainment of a majority of pupils in almost all year groups remains below the level expected for their age. Evidence seen in pupils' books and in mathematics lessons during the inspection confirms this. Leaders acknowledge that the current focus on raising attainment in mathematics must continue.

Progress in mathematics is improving but continues to be satisfactory. There are good systems in place to record teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and track their progress through the year and from year to year. This tracking data analysis shows that in the last year, most year groups made at least satisfactory progress, with more Year 6 pupils making two levels progress from their starting points in Year 2. The 2009 un-validated national performance data show that pupils with special educational needs and those from Black and minority ethnic groups reached higher standards than their comparator groups. These pupils also made satisfactory progress. Booster classes and one-to-one tuition were successful last year in helping to accelerate the progress of targeted pupils, enabling them to reach higher levels in their tests. A similar programme is planned for this year, which will be extended to include Year 5 pupils.

Teachers have received training and support to help improve the overall quality and consistency of their teaching. The most recent lesson observations conducted by the leadership team show that lessons are never less than satisfactory but the proportion of good lessons falls some way short of the target set in the raising attainment plan. During the inspection, four mathematics lessons were observed in which the quality of teaching was either good or satisfactory. Lesson planning in mathematics is now more systematic and all teachers use the same format. Plans

indicate what pupils will be learning and the different activities they will complete reflecting their abilities, but they are not sharp enough in identifying the steps pupils will take to make their learning successful. On all the plans scrutinised, teachers had made brief written evaluations summarising the outcomes from their lessons and how these would impact on the next day's teaching.

In the lessons observed, teachers used their interactive whiteboards well to support their teaching and focus pupils' attention. Learning assistants were deployed successfully, giving good support to individual pupils and groups. Relationships were good; pupils behaved well and most showed positive attitudes to learning. Pupils used hand-held whiteboards adeptly to support their mental and written calculations. In two lessons, pupils spent too long listening to the teacher and too little time working independently. In one, there was insufficient flexibility in the organisation of learning with more able pupils marking time rather than extending their learning. Although teachers ask many questions and encourage pupils to discuss solutions, these do not always probe pupils' understanding deeply enough. Marking in Year 6 mathematics books is good, with regular comments written by teachers, which recognise successful responses and identify what might be improved. Pupils also evaluate the success of their learning and respond to the comments made about their work.

Currently there appears to be no overall strategy for improving provision for pupils who are particularly able. The inclusion manager acknowledges that most of the focus on extending able pupils has been concentrated in Year 6. The school has a register of gifted and talented pupils and last term able pupils took part in a mathematics challenge day with pupils from other local primary schools. The school's tracking data show that last year the progress of pupils identified as being very able continued to be too variable. Teachers are now using their assessment information to identify higher ability pupils when planning group activities in lessons, but correctly pitching the level of challenge still requires development.

Leadership and management have strengthened since September. There are a number of good systems in place for keeping a check on pupils' attainment and progress, and for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. Individually, senior leaders have the experience, skill and commitment to bring about sustained improvement but they have yet to demonstrate collectively any more than a satisfactory 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

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector