

17 December 2009

Mr Titchener
King's Hill Primary School
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Dear Mr Titchener

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 December 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, the chair of governors for the time he gave to our phone discussion, and the Senior Children's Services Improvement Advisor who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 9–10 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- increase the pace of learning by raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils are able to do, especially the more able
- ensure teachers provide pupils with clear guidance about successes and improvement points when marking work
- ensure teachers use assessment information consistently to plan the right level of work for different groups of pupils
- ensure leaders at all levels are involved in rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures that focus sharply on the actions needed to accelerate pupils' progress.

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.

The 2009 end of Key Stage 2 unvalidated test results show that the Year 6 pupils who left the school in the summer term made satisfactory progress. Standards were broadly average in science and mathematics. They were well below the national average in English. The results of the teacher assessments for the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards in writing were broadly average. They were well below average in reading and mathematics. The latest school assessment information shows that standards are steadily rising. In 2010, a greater proportion of Year 6

pupils are expected to reach the standards expected for their age than previously. Throughout the school, standards in reading and mathematics are moving more quickly towards the national average than in writing. Standards in writing are well below the national average in most year groups. The school is aware of this and has recently introduced a whole-school approach to the teaching of writing. Teachers are increasingly placing a greater emphasis on basic writing skills during lessons and providing more opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in contexts which pupils find interesting. This is beginning to accelerate progress in writing.

Since the last inspection, staff have met to check the accuracy of the school's assessment information. The headteacher has introduced a whole-school approach to planning and regular meetings to discuss the progress of individual pupils with teachers. These actions have effectively raised teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities, including the more able pupils. Teachers now have a secure understanding of the attainment levels that pupils are currently working on and the progress that individual pupils need to make in order to reach the levels of which they are capable. The headteacher and the assistant headteacher are in the process of refining the way in which assessment information is analysed so that teachers can more effectively track the progress of different groups.

Teachers use assessment information satisfactorily to plan work for different groups of pupils. Although all teachers plan a range of activities, the activities do not always provide pupils of different abilities with an appropriate level of challenge. This is because teachers do not always take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning. In the majority of lessons observed, some of the group activities were either too easy or difficult. Consequently, some pupils made satisfactory rather than good progress. However, the school's latest assessment information and pupils' work show that the pace of learning is accelerating and some pupils in the school are making good progress. For instance, some teachers are effectively increasing the pace of learning by using techniques which give pupils greater responsibility for their learning. In one good example, Year 6 pupils used success criteria to evaluate their own work in order to evaluate each other's work and improve their own.

Marking has improved. Pupils told the inspector that they have a better understanding of how they are doing. Although there is some effective practice, marking does not always provide pupils with the clear guidance they need to improve their work. At its best, teachers set precise improvement targets and clearly explain to pupils how they can improve their work.

The headteacher, in partnership with Walsall's Children's Services Improvement Advisor, has continued to observe staff regularly. The advice to staff has been helpful and led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Members of the school leadership team have recently started to work alongside the headteacher to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Together, they have identified the actions all staff need to take to accelerate progress. These are all positive developments which

have strengthened the school's procedures for monitoring and evaluation and led to a greater focus on the actions needed to accelerate progress. The headteacher acknowledges that once staff are set specific targets for improvement, these need to be followed up as a matter of urgency to ensure staff implement actions consistently. Governors are supportive and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They are beginning to hold the school to account for the progress made by pupils. The satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement, together with sound systems for monitoring and evaluation, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Advisors and consultants from Walsall Children's Services have provided the headteacher and staff with some useful support. The impact of their work has been satisfactory.

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

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector