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Mrs Margaret Beesley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Beesley

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 November 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Please pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils for their courtesy and also to the assistant headteachers and local authority representative for meeting with me. I am also grateful to the chair of governors who was available for a telephone discussion at short notice.

Since the previous inspection, there have been staff changes in both key stages and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These include new leadership appointments in Key Stage 1, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. The latter to join the school in January 2010. A special needs co-ordinator has also been appointed from September 2009.

Pupil numbers are broadly similar to those at the previous inspection. The school has continued to refurbish and improve the quality of the outside environment.

As a result of the inspection on 24 and 25 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of teaching, particularly in involving pupils in the assessment of their learning
- ensure that the recent changes which have been made are embedded to maximise their effect on raising pupils' achievement.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made inadequate progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

September 2009



The key factor in the judgement of inadequate progress is that at Key Stage 2 attainment and progress in mathematics have continued to decline. The provisional results in 2009 indicate that given their starting points, pupils made inadequate progress in this subject. In English and science however, attainment at both expected and higher levels is improving, with satisfactory progress evident in English. However, standards overall remain exceptionally low.

Teaching is satisfactory. In all lessons, pupils behave well, work hard and relationships between pupils and teachers are good. In the small sample of lessons observed, however, there was a marked difference between the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy lessons. In literacy lessons, expectations were higher, pupils had a better understanding of their targets, the quality of marking helped pupils to understand how to improve, and both the activities and the pace of learning were more closely matched to individual learning needs.

School leaders have worked hard to introduce a range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching overall, including training activities, individual support plans and partnership work with the local authority. This work has been well supported by the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation schedule by senior leaders which includes pupil interviews, planning and workbook scrutiny, formal lesson observations each term and more regular informal focused visits to lessons. As a result, the school has been able to make improvements generally in the quality of classroom practice, by highlighting strengths in teaching and areas for development.

However, senior leaders are fully aware that observations do not yet fully focus on monitoring those pupils identified as underachieving in the school's detailed assessment and tracking information and that, despite improvements, there is still too much variation between subjects and key stages and not enough consistently good teaching to significantly raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 2.

The school sets realistic, yet challenging targets with an appropriate expectation that, to raise standards, pupils need to make consistently good progress in all core subjects. The use of assessment and tracking data to monitor pupils' progress is continuing to strengthen, with regular pupil progress meetings, where leaders hold teachers to account for pupils' academic performance.

The school is currently revising its assessment information records and systems, with the introduction of new software enabling senior leaders to further develop and target intervention where required. This work is already helping the school to focus more sharply on monitoring the rate at which individual pupils are learning in specific classes and subjects.

The school's determination to bring about rapid improvements is clearly evident.

Since the previous inspection, the work of the headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteachers, has had a positive impact on pupil progress, particularly in English. Improvements in the quality of teaching overall, the development of more rigorous assessment systems and the recent appointment of new leaders, with specific expertise, to strengthen the work in Key Stage 2 demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to raise standards and improve further.

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

Angela M Headon  
Her Majesty's Inspector