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Mr Robert Murray
Headteacher
High Greave Junior School
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Dear Mr Murray

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 November 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Would you pass on my thanks to the School Improvement Partner, local authority staff and governor I spoke with, and give my thanks to the pupils I met at lunchtime, who were a credit to you.

Since the last inspection the school has suffered the traumatic death of a teacher on site. The higher level teaching assistant has been absent through illness since June 2009. The school has two supply staff and two newly qualified teachers, and the local authority has seconded an experienced deputy head teacher to the school for one year.

As a result of the inspection on 21–22 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise achievement and standards in writing across the school.
- Ensure all teaching matches the best practice in school.
- Ensure the monitoring of teaching leads to better pupil learning and progress.
- Improve assessment practice so that pupils know how to improve their work.

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 pace of recovery and impact of improvement strategies has been adversely affected by a series of staffing issues and tragic circumstances. Nevertheless, achievement and standards are rising and the school is more stable than at any time in the past 24



months. There is clearly much significant work still to be done to recover lost ground but the indicators are positive with tangible evidence of impact against all key issues. The school recognise that it is critical the gains secured are sustained and that the positive progress evidenced currently in the school is converted into substantially improved attainment if the school is to break the cycle of pupil underachievement.

In 2009, although the standards attained and pupils' achievement remained significantly below national averages, the overall achievement and attainment of pupils improved. There was marked improvement in English and writing outcomes, both in terms of the percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 or better and the proportion of pupils making two levels of progress. Boys continue to perform least well, but the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities improved significantly in 2009. During the inspection pupils were observed making broadly satisfactory progress throughout the school. The schools robust assessment and monitoring data confirms this and illustrates the often accelerated progress among whole year groups and for individual targeted pupils. Year 6 is currently on track to reach their challenging targets. Despite these gains there was slippage elsewhere among other groups and in other subjects, which the school must be mindful of.

The school is sharing best practice and enhancing teachers' knowledge and understanding through additional training. They are getting good quality, practical support, coaching and mentoring from the School Improvement Partner and various consultants. They are also benefiting from opportunities to observe high quality practice in partner schools, which they are then using to improve their own teaching. As a result teaching is having an improved impact on pupils learning, and is reflected in more pupils reaching higher standards and making better progress. The use of teaching assistants to work with targeted pupils is also proving successful. Despite this improving profile, some inconsistency remains. For example, on occasion staffs' lack of expectation toward certain pupils encouraged low aspirations.

The school has refined its monitoring of the impact of teaching on learning and is now better placed to appropriately assess, interpret and intervene to promote further improvement in teachings' impact. By regularly evaluating teaching quality and analysing the robust pupil assessment and tracking data, senior staff are able to establish how much difference the specific improvement strategies are making. Staff have become empowered through training in the use of assessing pupil performance so that their continuous assessment is more precise and therefore more reliable.

The quality of marking and assessment is much improved. It has evolved from being largely celebratory to clearly identifying the next steps in pupils' learning as well as giving them positive reinforcement. Pupils are aware of their general targets and now receive regular and specific feedback on their progress and how to improve the quality of their work. Their parents are also being actively involved so that they can better support their child's learning. Pupils remain however less clear about exactly how well they are doing and how this relates to how well they should be doing.



The headteacher provides clear educational direction and is strategically addressing the deep-rooted issues afflicting the school. He is well supported by his experienced deputy and committed staff. Management capacity has been reinforced by sharing leadership more widely and strategies to increase the effectiveness of teaching are working as standards are rising. The more focused assessment, monitoring and evaluation practices underpin the improved pupil learning and progress. Staffing is more stable and senior staff are more able to focus wholly on driving standards further up, as opposed to being preoccupied with crisis management. The local authority and excellence in cities action zone is providing support in the form of funding, resources and training and this has accelerated the schools improvement.

This monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found that they meet current requirements

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

John Young
Her Majesty's Inspector

