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11 December 2009

Mrs Elizabeth Benfield
Iveson Primary School
Iveson Rise
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Dear Mrs Benfield

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and paired observations and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

The school's staffing and other circumstances remain the same as they were at the time of the previous inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 18-19 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise achievement and standards particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that all teaching matches the best practice in the school to increase the rate of progress for all learners.
- Refine systems to monitor more rigorously the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning.

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

The unvalidated 2009 national assessments for Key Stage 1 were significantly below the national average and worse than the school's own results in recent years. Some of the fall in attainment in Key Stage 1 can be attributed to changes in the school's population, with increasing proportions of pupils arriving in school in the very early stages of learning English. Nevertheless, the assessment information shows that

pupils did not do as well as expected in Key Stage 1. The 2009 assessments for the Early Years Foundation Stage also show a significant fall in attainment.

The 2009 Key Stage 2 national test results, again unvalidated, show a slight improvement in pupils' attainment overall and in mathematics and science; results in English were the same as those for 2008. However, these results also indicate that pupils' overall rate of progress in Key Stage 2 has fallen significantly between 2008 and 2009. Only the small number of higher attaining pupils and those with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities made satisfactory progress.

The school's tracking information suggests that pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6 is improving. However, it also shows that, for other year groups, progress is generally slower than it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress has improved and assessment information is becoming more accurate. Nevertheless, there are insecurities in some assessments which cast doubt on the school's judgements about progress.

While the quality of teaching is the most important factor in influencing pupils' learning and progress, there are others. In particular, pupils' attendance has fallen since the 2008 inspection so that progress is now hindered for a significant number of pupils. In some lessons in literacy and numeracy, pupils move out of the lesson to receive extra help. Whilst recognising the importance of this support, its timing means that pupils sometimes miss out on important parts of lessons with the whole class. This has a negative impact on the progress these pupils make.

Some aspects of teaching have improved since the school was inspected in 2008. Much of the marking now tells pupils what they need to do to make their work better and pupils say how much they value the comments that teachers make. The school's extra support for individual pupils is purposeful and effective. However, significant weaknesses in teaching remain and this visit showed little evidence of the examples of good teaching identified in the previous inspection. The pace of learning in lessons is often too slow; teachers do not expect enough of pupils, particularly higher attainers, and do not move them on as quickly as they should. The resources that teachers use are frequently dull, particularly in the early years in school.

The school's leaders monitor lessons regularly, but the lesson observation forms that the school uses emphasise what teachers and pupils do, and still do not provide a clear focus on how well teaching is helping pupils to learn. Observations lack sharpness and do not sufficiently identify weaknesses that are having a long term effect on pupils' progress as indicated by the assessment information.

The school has not been successful in developing a better capacity to improve. It has not established a track record of significant improvement in pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation was judged to be 'sometimes over generous' at the time of the inspection and it remains so. The school development plan does address some important issues, including the fall in standards in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years

Foundation Stage. However, it also reveals a lack of precision in identifying other issues facing the school. For example, there are references to ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning 'remains high' and to maintaining the 'improvement in attendance' when attendance has, according to the school's own figures, fallen for the last two years.

The school improvement partner accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance. The local authority has provided support, notably in mathematics and in improving the school's support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, more support is now needed, particularly in helping teachers to understand the requirements for a good lesson and in providing more training in lesson observation for the school's leaders.

This monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

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

Christine Harrison
Additional Inspector