

Suite 22 West
Lancs
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320

19 November 2009

Mr C Abbott
Aston by Sutton Primary School
Aston Lane
Aston
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 3DB

Dear Mr Abbott

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday, 18 November 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Could you please pass on my thanks to the chair of governors for speaking to me at short notice and to the pupils I talked to during lessons.

At the time of the last inspection, the teacher of the Year 5/6 class was seconded to another school and a temporary teacher taught the class. From September 2009 a new permanent teacher has been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 13 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6, especially in writing and for the more able
- sharpen tracking systems, target setting and ways of involving pupils more in assessing their work
- improve teaching quality in Years 1 to 6.

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 results of tests and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2009 were similar to those of 2008, except in writing, where standards improved. Overall, pupils' attainment was slightly above the average. The results of the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2009 were lower than in 2008. English results were down



on those of the previous year. Looking at the detail of the English results, pupils performed well in reading. Nearly half of the 11 pupils achieved the highest Level 5. No pupils achieved Level 5 in writing. The school was disappointed with and surprised by the writing results at Year 6. On investigation, three of the pupils were found to have missed achieving Level 5 by a very narrow margin.

Pupils are making good progress in their writing. This was evident in lessons and in pupils' workbooks. Pupils in all classes are producing writing of length and quality for their respective ages and abilities. The strategy to improve writing mentioned in the inspection report of 2008 is now fully embedded and is raising standards throughout the school. Some particularly good writing was seen in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils in Year 6 believe they are making better progress than during last year. Pupils are proud of their writing. Standards of presentation, including handwriting, are high. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to improve their writing. They refer to their targets for improvement and help each other through constructive evaluation of each other's work.

The teaching observed was of good quality. The strengths in relationships between pupils and staff noted in the inspection report of 2008 are maintained. Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. Teachers prepare interesting work for pupils and ensure that the brighter ones have more challenging tasks to undertake. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and supported well; making best use of the limited resources of accommodation and staffing that are available to the school. Teachers are positive with pupils. They have high expectations of pupils' work, which is seen in the quality of their marking. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' work. They have a good knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment and of their next steps.

The headteacher, supported effectively by the local authority and the assistant headteacher, has put in place rigorous systems to monitor the progress and standards achieved by each pupil. This information, and that provided by analyses of predicted outcomes for pupils, is used effectively to assess whether pupils are making sufficient progress. Discussions are held with staff, and pupils are often involved. The headteacher is raising aspirations of what pupils can achieve through seeking more challenging targets for pupils' attainment. Leadership and management, overall, are improved. The headteacher and assistant headteacher articulate a clear direction for improvement. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed better, there is new leadership for literacy and the governing body has an improved capacity to provide challenge and oversight.

The strengths of provision identified in the inspection of 2008 have been sustained. The school has a very good ethos and pupils are happy here. The school continues to provide good care, guidance and support for pupils. This is recognised and praised by parents and carers, many of whom live at a distance from the school and who travel across a local authority boundary for their children to attend. However

there remains much to do. Good outcomes for pupils have not yet been maintained over the longer period. The school's development plan requires a sharper focus and the school's self-evaluation a more realistic appraisal. The limitations of the accommodation provide barriers to pupils' learning. Most importantly, the school has no assembly hall and no readily accessible outdoor area for Reception children. These are significant shortcomings that result in unsatisfactory compromises; for example in promoting physical education and exercise and in improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector