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Mr T Cooke
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cooke

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 8 June 2010, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please do extend my sincere thanks to the staff and the pupils I visited in lessons and to members of the senior and middle leadership team and the pupils whom I interviewed.

At the last inspection in 2008, the school was judged to be satisfactory for its overall effectiveness, for achievement and standards, quality of provision, leadership and management.

As a result of the inspection on 10–11 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that children's good start in the Nursery in the development of language, number and independent learning skills is maintained in the Reception Year
- provide more opportunities for extended writing in order to raise achievement
- ensure that the new senior management team makes an effective contribution to improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.

Since the last inspection, the school has recruited five new teachers, three of whom were newly qualified teachers. Since September 2009, the headteacher has restructured the management structure and recruited a new deputy head and one key stage manager.

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

Following inspection, pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved from significantly below national averages to within national averages in 2009. According to the school's own teacher assessments, pupils' progress is set to improve further in the current year, especially in writing and reading but to a lesser extent in mathematics.

Children in Reception now work and play in a stimulating and well-designed learning environment and are provided with good structured opportunities for creative play and develop independent learning skills through choosing their activity at the start of each day. They show high levels of enjoyment and curiosity in their learning and have good opportunities to develop their spoken and number skills. This year's predicted results based on school data show the majority of children making satisfactory progress towards the goals set for children of this age, with a greater number exceeding expectations in the acquisition of spoken language and mathematical skills. The school has made less progress in developing children's written language skills. Children, especially the less able, have insufficiently structured opportunities to recognise and write correctly, simple common words in their sentences.

Year 6 pupils now have stimulating opportunities to develop their extended writing skills and they produce creative and well-thought out pieces of work, appropriately written for a range of audiences. This good practice needs to be extended more consistently in other year groups. Presentation of pupils' work is variable and better in English than in mathematics. The inspector observed some good examples of pupils working independently and in groups, on tasks that were well suited to their ability level. In these instances, assessment processes successfully underpinned the planning of learning; pupils were challenged and well supported, and produced good standards of work. In a minority of lessons however, pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to apply their numeracy and literacy skills in everyday contexts. In a number of lessons, teachers did not always check that pupils had fully understood what was being taught. While there are some good examples of assessed written work, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils have corrected their work before moving on to the next stage of learning.

In the majority of lessons, teachers built good relations with pupils and fostered a productive and happy learning environment. In a small minority of lessons, teachers had not planned activities or tasks that took into account the prior attainment of their pupils. In these instances, pupils were unable to concentrate or lost interest, as a result. There are some very good examples of teaching assistants working constructively with pupils on developing independent learning skills; however in a small minority of lessons, teaching assistants were not being deployed effectively.

The headteacher has been instrumental in changing the ethos of the school and has created a whole-school focus on raising the achievement and aspirations of all pupils. Through working closely with the local authority advisers and external consultants, the school has carried out reviews of its provision and developed quality

assurance systems, establishing clearer tracking and intervention for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Quality assurance processes are now much more systematic and thorough and the new senior leadership team is working well together to steer forward improvements in teaching and assessment. The deputy headteacher has made a good start in training staff on assessing pupil progress in lessons and is now starting to work with the headteacher on lesson observations. The Key Stage 2 manager has been responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and is developing the teaching of mathematics. The Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage manager is establishing ways of recording what pupils learn on a daily basis and over a period of time. The impact of these initiatives has been to start raising standards in the classroom.

Managers are now very aware that they need to focus more closely on the learning and progress of all pupils during lesson observations and to share good practice across the school, so as to sustain even greater outcomes in achievement and attainment.

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

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector