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Mrs Rapsomanikis  
Stoke Heath Primary School  
Heath Crescent  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mrs Rapsomanikis

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 March 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the senior leaders, the learning mentor, other staff and the pupils.

Since the last inspection, one teacher left the school and another teacher changed to a part-time role within the school. These have been replaced by two full-time teachers. In addition, the deputy headteacher left the school and the assistant headteacher was appointed as deputy headteacher. An additional teacher was appointed to fill the teaching post vacated by the assistant headteacher and to act as leader of Years 5 and 6.

As a result of the inspection on 15-16 April 2008, the school was asked to:

- accelerate pupils' progress and raise the standards they attain, particularly in Years 3 to 6
- ensure that teaching is always closely matched to all pupils' needs and that pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their performance
- more sharply analyse how provision, particularly teaching, influences pupils' progress and the standards they attain
- work more closely with parents to improve attendance

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.



Since the last inspection, the 2009 end of Key Stage 2 test results show that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has remained low. Although pupils' attainment in science was better in 2009 than in previous years, attainment in mathematics remained broadly the same and attainment in English fell sharply and was lower than at any time over the past five years. The 2009 teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 declined in reading, writing and mathematics from broadly average in 2007 to low in 2009.

The 2007-2009 value-added measures show that pupils' progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 has risen steadily and was just above average in English and mathematics in 2009. However, the school's own information shows that pupils' progress in most year groups since the time of the last inspection has not accelerated fast enough. Consequently, pupils' attainment in nearly all year groups remains low, especially in writing, and the attainment gap between the pupils at this school and pupils in other schools is not closing with sufficient speed.

Since September 2009, the newly appointed senior leaders have worked well with the headteacher and, collectively, they have approached school improvement with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. Work undertaken with the staff on assessing pupils' work is beginning to have a positive impact on teachers' knowledge of use of assessment to improve the quality of learning in lessons. However, this development is not embedded and in too many lessons work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' capabilities. Although there is some good teaching where teachers use assessment information well to build progressively on pupils' current levels of skills and knowledge, there is not enough good teaching to accelerate learning fast enough.

The school has reviewed its policy for marking of pupils' work and, although there are some examples of good-quality marking which give pupils helpful guidance of how to improve their work, it is inconsistent. Most pupils know that they have targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils in some classes can talk about the link between their targets and their work in lessons. However, in most classes, although targets are displayed on the classroom walls, pupils are not provided with enough guidance on how to achieve them.

Since September 2009, all the systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have started to improve. The new senior leaders have begun to evaluate more rigorously the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. In meetings with the senior leaders, teachers are now beginning to be held to account for the progress made by the pupils. The developing skills of leaders in lesson observations provide increasingly accurate information about strengths in teaching and areas for improvement. Greater rigour in checking pupils' work and monitoring teachers' planning is helping leaders analyse more effectively how all aspects of provision are having an impact on pupils' attainment and progress. However, senior leaders are aware that all of these developments are not yet embedded, and their skills of analysing pupils' progress data, setting pupils' progress targets and evaluating the



effectiveness of learning in lessons are not yet sufficiently developed. Because the senior leaders have not yet had a significant impact on raising pupils' achievement, the school has not demonstrated a better capacity to sustain improvement.

Since the last inspection, the school's learning mentors have worked closely with the welfare service and parents to improve attendance. Holidays in term-time are now no longer authorised, rewards are given for good attendance, homes are visited and penalty notices are served on parents of pupils with poor attendance. Attendance of those pupils who were persistently absent has improved and there has been a steady decline in the proportion of pupils who are absent. However, despite the best efforts of the school, overall attendance remains low.

Although the headteacher values the support provided by the local authority in many areas for improvement, the impact on raising pupils' achievement in all year groups since the last inspection has not been great enough. All the senior leaders say that they would like more support with analysis of pupils' progress data.

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

Roy Bowers  
Her Majesty's Inspector

