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Mrs R Dean
Headteacher
Johnson Fold Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Dean

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 February 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils, assistant headteacher, chair of governors and representatives from the local authority who attended meetings at very short notice.

The school appointed two newly qualified teachers in September 2008, a newly qualified teacher in September 2009 and a temporary teacher to cover a teacher's absence in January 2010.

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

- raise standards, especially in writing and for the more able pupils
- improve the setting of targets in all subjects
- improve attendance
- provide an adequately sized and resourced outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement is now improving throughout the school in English and mathematics. Pupils' writing skills are also improving and they are now making better progress. Pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those found typically for three-year-olds. In the 2009 end of Key Stage 2 tests, pupils attained standards that were significantly below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2009 was broadly average in reading and mathematics but significantly below average in writing. Evidence from lesson observations shows that pupils are now making much better progress due to improved teaching and, consequently, standards are rising.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most teaching is now good or better and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and their progress. Pupils work very hard in lessons and learn well as the activities planned are interesting, enjoyable and challenging. Effective and rigorous assessment systems are in place to ensure teachers plan effectively to meet pupils' needs. Teachers address any misunderstanding in lessons and provide good quality feedback to pupils both orally and through marking in workbooks. New technology is used well to stimulate discussion and learning for all pupils. The school has also implemented a good variety of intervention strategies for identified groups of pupils and individuals to improve their writing, mathematics and reading skills. These factors are having a positive impact on pupils' progress but this has not yet shown in end of Key Stage 2 assessments.

Challenging targets set for pupils are based on secure assessment and are achievable, based on the progress of pupils seen during the inspection. Lessons are clearly focused with learning targets and expected outcomes made explicit so teachers and pupils themselves can monitor learning during lessons. The vast majority of pupils can state their personal learning targets and say exactly what they have to do to reach the challenging levels they are set.

Pupils' attendance is now broadly average and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has effective systems in place to promote good attendance and works well with the local authority to ensure it improves. The school's analysis of attendance information shows that older pupils' attendance is better than younger pupils as they want to come to school and do so on their own. Pupils are acutely aware of the reasons why good attendance and punctuality are important and can relate this well to the world of work outside school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage now has a high quality and well used outside area for the children to learn in. They are provided with a good variety of activities that meet the requirements of the curriculum and the interests of the pupils. Standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage have risen considerably since the last inspection as a consequence of sound investment in this area. Improved links have recently been

made with families through The Centre, a pre-school group run by the school which successfully attracts pupils and provides them with suitable support and play facilities before they start in the nursery.

Senior leaders have ensured new systems and procedures are fully understood and used effectively by all staff. The extensive range of information collected through the rigorous monitoring activities is used well to develop future plans, tackle weaknesses in teaching and learning and to accurately inform leaders of the impact of the school's work. Underachievement is now identified and remedied quickly. There has been greater urgency in the last eight months to improve standards and this is clearly bearing fruit. Senior leaders are enthusiastic, reflective and provide clear direction. The school makes good use of available support from the local authority to improve teaching and raise standards and ensures relevant training opportunities contribute to improving the provision.

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

Liam Trippier
Her Majesty's Inspector