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Mrs Alicia Todhunter  
Radcliffe Hall Church of England/Methodist Controlled Primary School  
Bury Street  
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Manchester  
Lancashire  
M26 2GB

Dear Mrs Todhunter

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 May 2010, for the time you gave to our phone conversation and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils, Chair of the Governing Body and your local authority representative, who all attended meetings at short notice.

The school has experienced some disruption to staffing since the last inspection. Three teachers have joined the school in the last year.

As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise achievement and standards, particularly in English and mathematics
- share good practice in teaching across the school in order to raise expectations of what pupils can do and challenge them to take more responsibility for their own learning
- monitor the progress of pupils more closely, in order to identify any possible underachievement and to establish more appropriate strategies for academic support
- develop the role of middle leaders in taking more responsibility for performance in their subject areas.

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.

Pupils' achievement is now improving throughout the school. They start school with skills and knowledge at levels below those found typically for most three-year-olds. In the 2009, Key Stage 2 tests they reached broadly average standards in mathematics and science but significantly below average standards in English. Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' workbooks and school data shows that progress for all groups of pupils is improving and standards, although still below average, are rising. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' reading and writing skills are having a positive impact on their rates of progress. Pupils are on track to meet the targets set for them and some targets look likely to be surpassed in light of the better teaching received by pupils.

Good practice in teaching has been shared since the last inspection to improve the quality of learning for all pupils effectively and to improve their rates of progress. As a result, pupils take more responsibility for their own learning. They enjoy project work and can research themes using the internet appropriately. They have developed good self-help strategies to solve problems in classes so that they can work independently for sustained periods. Pupils are generally well behaved, have positive attitudes and practise their basic skills well. Sometimes, opportunities for pupils to talk to consider ideas or to consolidate previous learning are missed in lessons. Teachers' lesson planning is generally of good quality though and uses assessment information from previous lessons to ensure work planned is matched to the needs of pupils in English and mathematics lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good quality oral feedback to pupils so they know how to improve their work in lessons, but the quality of marking in pupils' workbooks is inconsistent and does not always provide clear guidance.

The progress of all groups of pupils is now monitored closely using a new and good-quality tracking system. All staff have been trained to use the system and information from regular assessments for each child is used to ensure that any underachievement is addressed quickly. The effectiveness of the tracking system is currently limited though because it is so new and the information held is not summarised to provide regular information to all relevant staff to inform future strategic planning precisely.

Middle leaders now take on more responsibility for the achievement of pupils across the school. They are involved in a range of monitoring activities to inform school self-evaluation and they identify generally appropriate priorities for strategic plans. Currently, middle leaders do not observe classroom practice directly to identify clear strengths and areas for development in the provision. Consequently, some action plans lack precision.

The school is effectively building its capacity to improve. Systems and procedures are developing well with good quality support from the local authority. The school makes full use of the relevant training opportunities provided and these are contributing well to the improving provision and the progress that pupils make. Senior leaders are reflective, open to new ideas and lead by example. The school is increasingly using information from assessments to identify appropriate priorities and to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes. Governors are starting to challenge the school well, however, they do not always receive enough information about the progress and attainment of pupils. The headteacher is aware of this and has plans to ensure governors are better informed about the school's provision. Newly qualified teachers are mentored effectively.

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