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5 March 2010

Mrs L Simpson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Simpson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 March 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover of staff. The deputy headteacher has been seconded to work for the local authority for a year. Three teachers new to teaching started at the school in September 2008 and a further two started in September 2009. There are two new members of the senior leadership team and two more will join the school after Easter. Since the last inspection there are new subject leaders for most subjects.

As a result of the inspection on 22 to 23 April 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards and the rate of progress particularly in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, making sure the pupils know what to do to improve their work.
- Increase the contribution subject leaders make to school improvement.

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.

Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 fell significantly and their progress slowed. This was in part because of high staff turnover and absence. This meant there has been reduced continuity in pupils' learning which adversely effected their achievement. More recently, pupils' achievement has improved. In 2009, for example, there were more pupils attaining the higher Level 5 than at the time of the last inspection and in the current classes there are signs of accelerating progress. Pupils' achievement in subjects such as physical education, art and music is improving strongly.

In the five lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' learning was predominantly satisfactory. Strong relationships with the teacher gave pupils the confidence to suggest answers and to ask questions. Pupils were generally well behaved, polite and worked well with others in the class. In some lessons pupils did not have much time to work because they were sitting listening for long periods and rarely had the chance to think and to explain the reasons for their answers. In the better lessons, pupils were active throughout and the teacher used their levels of understanding to take their learning onto a higher level. In one particularly good mathematics lesson, the teacher based the lesson on pupils' prior work, ensured everyone in the class answered his questions on their personal whiteboards, and skilfully moved their understanding of coordinates onto a higher level. Teachers monitored pupils' learning well throughout the lesson to ensure most pupils were on task and were making progress. Some pupils, however, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, did not make as much progress as they could have because the content of the lesson was sometimes based on things they already knew. A small selection of pupils' work in books showed that pupils' achievement is improving. They also showed that some pupils could have been challenged more, could have produced more written work, and could have produced the same quality of work they were able to do in English lessons in other subjects. Teachers marked pupils' work frequently and thoroughly and this helped pupils to have an understanding of what they needed to do to improve. All pupils have targets but these were sometimes inappropriate as they were not linked to the work they were doing, and some pupils were not able to read or understand them.

The local authority has provided satisfactory support for senior leaders and subject leaders, through, for example, visits from an adviser and from consultants. The headteacher's judgement on pupils' achievement and their learning was accurate and based securely on observations in lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. These activities are also now part of the systems and procedures for subject leaders so they have a better understanding of pupils' achievement and outcomes in all subjects. Subject leaders now contribute more to school improvement and to the achievement of pupils in their subjects. There is a wide variety in the quality of their action plans for their subjects. The better plans are focused on improving pupils' outcomes and raising standards. There has also been an improvement to the system which tracks pupils' achievement. All staff are now accountable for the progress of all the pupils in their class. Every half term, for example, teachers meet to discuss the achievement of each pupil in their class to



identify what can be done to enable pupils to improve further. This has helped to strengthen the school's capacity to improve.

Although staffing is more stable, the school remains in a vulnerable position, with a few more staff changes still to come and with improvement since the last inspection only just satisfactory.

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

Allan Torr  
Her Majesty's Inspector