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Mr P Stephens
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Dear Mr Stephens

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 May 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 pupils and Chair of Governors for spending time telling me about the school.

Since the last inspection the school has expanded its senior leadership through appointing a deputy headteacher. Two newly qualified teachers were appointed this year to replace teachers who left.

As a result of the inspection on 8–9 July 2008, the school was asked to:

- match work better to the needs of pupils of differing ability so that they are set consistently challenging work and make faster progress
- bring more rigour into the work of leaders and managers to sharpen their impact on provision and standards
- involve pupils more in assessing their own progress against their targets and ensure that marking gives them a better idea of how they can improve
- strengthen links with parents and remedy the lack of confidence in the school felt by some parents.

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

In the 2009 Key Stage 2 tests, pupils made significantly better progress than in 2008 as a result of improved progress and attainment in mathematics and science. While progress and attainment remained broadly average in English, they fell a little. Combined attainment in English, mathematics and science rose from significantly below average to broadly average. The school's data for current pupils show variation in attainment and progress across subjects and year groups. They indicate that a substantial proportion of Year 6 pupils make the expected progress in reading but that progress in writing is slower. Records show that, in mathematics, fewer Year 6 pupils than expected were on course to make the expected two levels of progress earlier this year. However, since then, targeted intervention has increased progress. More pupils than in 2009 are on track to reach the highest level in mathematics. While there is an upward trend in progress, there remains variation. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the school's data show that pupils have, on average, made expected or better progress during the current year in most subjects but sometimes this has not been enough for every pupil to make up for any lower progress during a previous year. The data show some pockets of slow progress across year groups and subjects.

The school has worked hard since the last inspection and put in place many improvements.

Lessons now meet pupils' needs better and involve them more in assessing their progress. Activities more closely match the learning objectives for the lessons, which set different levels of challenge for groups within the class. Pupils assess their progress against these objectives regularly, but this is sometimes based on actions they have completed rather than on how well they understand. A particular strength is that pupils reflect each week on their learning and record it in a log, although this does not build up into assessment of their progress towards longer-term targets or the next National Curriculum level. Each pupil has a class target in English, mathematics and science, as well as individual targets set after their work has been marked. Each week, time is devoted to working on these individual targets and, as a result, pupils show improvement in areas of previous weakness. The quality of marking and setting of these targets has improved, with some strong examples, although practice varies. Teaching quality is improving, with pupils consequently making better progress, although sometimes they find work too easy or spend a long time listening rather than being actively involved in learning. Pupils report improved behaviour in lessons, greater use of information and communication technology, and carrying out more experiments in science. There are some real strengths in teaching, but the variability contributes to pupils' differing progress across years and subjects.

The school and governing body have taken steps to identify any concerns parents and carers had at the time of the last inspection and make improvements. A detailed action plan has led to improved contact, responsiveness and provision of information, including on the school's website. Parents' and carers' surveys show greater satisfaction with information about their child's progress and with

approaching the school with questions or problems. Parents and carers spoken to expressed confidence in the school and access to staff; some would like more information about what their child will be learning next.

The strategic appointment of a deputy headteacher, who has worked closely with middle leaders, has underpinned an increased drive for improvement. Leaders of English, mathematics, science, assessment and special educational needs are clear about their roles and are energetically increasing their impact on pupils' progress. Detailed and focused action plans have brought about improvements in teaching and assessment. Systematic analysis of evidence gathered from work scrutiny, learning walks and monitoring of lesson plans has identified ways forward, increased consistency and informed professional development. Leaders of English, mathematics and science focus more rigorously on identifying areas for improvement and bringing about change. This has led to the introduction of new approaches throughout the school, for example to support extended writing and experimental work in science. Leaders use data on pupils' progress more effectively to identify where individuals are at risk of falling behind and to provide intervention. They use averages for an overview, but these can mask any underachievement and the progress made by those who do not have a result from Key Stage 1 assessments. Data do not readily show each term the progress made by individuals, or groups starting from different levels, since they joined the school or received intervention support. In lessons I observed jointly with you and the deputy headteacher, judgements were largely accurate. Leaders recognise the need to raise teaching quality further in order to increase the consistency of pupils' progress across year groups and subjects. The improvements the school has made since the last inspection, the systems it has put in place and the way in which distributed leadership has been developed indicate good improvement in the school's capacity to continue to improve.

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

Gill Close
Her Majesty's Inspector