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Mr D Grant
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Dear David Grant

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 23 March, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to convey my thanks to your Chair of the governing body and acknowledge the warmth of the welcome from the pupils.

As a result of the inspection on 5 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards across the school for all pupils, especially in writing and mathematics, and particularly in Years 1 and 2
- improve the quality of teaching by matching work more accurately to pupils' needs and helping pupils to understand better how to improve their work
- ensure that the school evaluates itself more rigorously so that weaker aspects of provision can be identified and addressed.

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.

The school's procedures to track and monitor the progress of all pupils are now firmly embedded. This is having a positive impact in enabling a swifter response to underachievement and in raising expectations of what individual pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the inspection and is now above the national average in English and science and significantly so in mathematics. Standards in Year 2 have also improved and are no longer significantly below average; however attainment remains below national average in writing and mathematics. Teaching assistants work closely with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with behavioural, social and



emotional needs. Teaching assistants' respectful and caring approach enables good relationships to be formed and pupils' attitudes to work improve.

Children's progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall so that by the time they start in Year 1 the majority of children are working at age-related expectations. However, progress in writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across Years 1 and 2 is weaker. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are relatively few resources to improve children's early writing skills. Across Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds is underdeveloped because the teaching of phonics does not occur with sufficient regularity nor is there a consistent approach from all teachers and teaching assistants.

Teaching is satisfactory overall across the school and it is improving across Years 3 to 6. The majority of lessons follow a clear structure where pupils are introduced to new concepts, given suitable opportunities to rehearse and practise these new ideas and then expected to apply their learning. Occasionally teachers spend too long introducing the lesson so that pupils are given limited time to work independently and make the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and good levels of concentration because teachers take care to provide them with stimulating activities. Information technology is used particularly well to engage older pupils in their learning. They clearly appreciate opportunities, for example, to use computers to learn more about time zones around the world. They also develop their language skills and their understanding of fact and opinion well, as when responding enthusiastically to a film clip depicting the exploits of a superhero.

The use of assessment across the school is developing satisfactorily to more closely monitor the progress of pupils. Although pupils are set different tasks in lessons, they are not always clear about what they are expected to learn. This was identified at the time of the last inspection. Teachers in Year 5 and 6 are now sharing the criteria for a successful piece of work during lessons to set pupils clear and challenging targets. Learning improves where these criteria are used to evaluate pupils' work and involve them in identifying their next steps in learning. This approach is not yet consistently applied in all subjects.

The school's leadership has contributed well to raising pupils' standards since the last inspection. Leaders have developed systems to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information collected on individual pupils' progress. This has been used increasingly effectively to support groups of pupils and raise their level of achievement. Governors continue to provide daily support and are involved in deciding how efficiently the school uses and manages its available resources. The school's improvement plan includes more detailed and quantifiable measurements of the progress pupils are expected to make.



Despite a number of improvements since the last inspection the capacity of the school's leadership remains satisfactory. Subject coordinators in the key areas of mathematics, literacy and the Early Years Foundation Stage are not yet fully involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the school's actions to increase pupils' achievement. Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school but their monitoring of teaching does not always provide teachers with clear guidance and advice on how to ensure pupils' achievement is consistently good.

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

Mark Lindfield

Her Majesty's Inspector