

Wednesday 19 May 2010

Mrs Helen Ryan
Beckers Green Primary School
Beckers Green Road
Braintree
CM7 3PR

Dear Mrs Ryan

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 18 May 2010, for the time you gave to our planning meeting and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority officer, the staff and the pupils.

As a result of the inspection on 17–18 June 2008 the school was asked to address the following matters.

- Make sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good enough to raise standards, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve the way teachers use information about pupils' progress to set sufficiently challenging targets to support their learning.
- Ensure that marking, particularly in mathematics and science, helps pupil understand how they need to improve their work.
- Improve leaders' and governors' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work so that self evaluation is accurate and that challenging school targets are set.

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 there has been an overall decline in pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. These have been significantly below the national averages for the last three years. In the 2009 tests at the end of Year 6, no pupil achieved Level 5 in English, although nine pupils achieved Level 5 in maths and seven in science. While there was some improvement



in pupil progress for all subjects in 2008, this was not sustained in 2009. Over a three year period, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science was significantly below national averages. In 2009, 38% of pupils achieved two levels progress in both English and mathematics well below what would be expected nationally.

The school's tracking system shows that current attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is expected to show an improvement on last year, although for the more able pupils it still below the national expectation. The current attainment for Year 5 also shows improvement for both the average and above average pupils. The current rates of progress in mathematics and English for pupils in Year 6 are at similar levels to the top 75% of schools nationally.

Observations during the inspection, the school's own monitoring records and local authority reports show that teaching is good for the older pupils, including mathematics and science. The intensive support provided by the local authority has helped to improve the overall quality of teaching. However, high quality teaching is not sufficiently embedded throughout the school and, where the teaching is less effective, this is hindering the pupils' progress.

The school's leadership team has established a clear sense of direction to improve outcomes for pupils. With good support from the local authority, the senior leadership team has been instrumental in addressing the inadequate teaching and providing training and guidance to improve the quality of lessons. The school is now rigorously using its pupil data to set challenging targets and review pupils' progress; this has been particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are making good progress.

An interview with pupils and scrutiny of books shows that there are some good examples of teachers' marking with next step guidance. As a consequence, pupils say they understand what they need to do to improve and act upon it. A comprehensive system of setting both individual pupil targets and ability group targets is well established in all year groups, and pupils say they find these helpful.

The headteacher has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is in the process of addressing less effective teaching. There has been intensive monitoring of the school's work by all members of the leadership team as well as the local authority and the governing body. As a result, evaluation is accurate and action is taken to address areas for development. Governance is now much stronger, with governors demonstrating a better knowledge and insight into the work of the school. They have developed effective procedures to check its work so that they are now well placed to hold school leaders to account and to ensure that the school continues 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

Karen Heath
Lead Inspector

