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Mrs L Blackham  
Headteacher  
Leesland Church of England Controlled Junior School  
Gordon Road  
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Dear Mrs Blackham

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and the pupils gave when I inspected your school on 4 December and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 10–11 January 2008, the school was asked to raise standards in English, particularly in writing, and in mathematics and science, and to ensure more able pupils are set challenging targets so as to reach their full potential.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

inadequate progress in making improvements

and

inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the inspection, pupils' progress has remained broadly in line with that seen nationally. In lessons, the pace of learning is satisfactory, albeit with inconsistencies between classes and subjects. There has been some acceleration in mathematics and English, however not enough to significantly improve pupils' achievement. Their attainment has risen by the time they leave but remains below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in English and mathematics is now closer to that in most schools but is still below it. The quality of writing has seen some improvement but remains below average, compounded by continued



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weakness in many pupils' speaking and listening skills. In science, progress has remained broadly average, although it has fluctuated. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level remains average. More able pupils are set appropriately challenging targets in English, mathematics and science and, in some cases, have begun to make better progress toward them. However, some pupils still do not achieve enough and the number reaching higher levels remains below that expected.

Teaching has not sustained or capitalised on the strengths evident in the last inspection. While lessons address satisfactory learning objectives, the management of learning is not effective enough to promote good progress. The time allowed for tasks is sometimes insufficient for work to be completed. Class discussions are regular but do not routinely challenge pupils according to their ability, or develop speaking and listening skills so as to rehearse ideas for writing. More effective tracking of pupils' progress over time is helping identify those capable of attaining high standards and those who are underachieving. Strategies adopted in response, such as attainment-based classes in Year 6, have yet to make an impact on achievement. Some opportunities are missed by teachers to check pupils' progress during lessons so as to intervene if progress is too slow. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive more closely targeted support so they make better progress than others. Most pupils know their individual targets in English and mathematics, but are not always clear about how to reach them, or independent enough in doing so. Most know their class targets in science but not their individual priorities within these broader goals. Some good steps have been taken to develop the curriculum, in particular by offering more engaging opportunities for writing. Pupils are enjoying these but, while there are some indications of higher quality writing, these opportunities also have yet to make a clear impact.

The school's limited success in tackling the areas for improvement indicates it has not built on the good capacity to improve identified in the previous inspection. Improvement plans focus on mathematics and English and pay too little attention to science. There are insufficient milestones to check that progress is being made on priority areas or by each year group, based on their attainment on entry. Senior leaders are working hard and are committed but have not managed to ensure change happens fast enough. The monitoring of provision makes reference to a wide range of assessment data, work scrutiny and lesson observation. However, too little weighting is given to the impact on learning over time when evaluating the quality of provision or defining, for example, aspects of teaching requiring improvement. Leaders for English and mathematics have a good awareness of what needs to be improved. Nevertheless, some priorities are not included in their development plans and some have not been tackled with enough vigour. Subject leadership for science is underdeveloped.

Since the inspection, local authority support has made a limited impact on the effectiveness of school. From the start of this term, closer links have been



established so as to help accelerate improvement, in particular through supporting professional development for staff.

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

Stephen Long  
Her Majesty's Inspector