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Thursday 17 June 2010

Mrs Donna Evans
Droitwich, Westacre Middle School
Ombersley Way
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Dear Mrs Evans

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 16 June 2010 with my colleague Joanne Harvey HMI and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Could you please pass on our thanks to the pupils and staff for their help and cooperation during the visit?

Since the time of the previous inspection the school has appointed a deputy headteacher and there have been significant changes to the leadership of subject areas, including the secondment of one post holder to another school which is causing concern.

As a result of the inspection on July 2008, the school was asked to;

- ensure that all pupils consistently progress as well as they should in all classes
- make sure that teaching is always closely matched to all pupils' needs and that expectations of pupils are high enough
- increase opportunities for pupils to work together to solve problems and develop independence as learners, particularly in science
- provide all pupils with clear guidance, through targets and marking, to help them to improve their performance.

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

Standards have risen within the school. The new tracking system is able to demonstrate that the progress made in mathematics is good from the time pupils start in Year 5 and leave at the end of Year 7. Similar data shows that science standards have risen and also shows how well pupils progress with their experimental skills. English results are improving, but not to the extent of science and mathematics, although the impact of the strong emphasis on improving the quality of pupils' writing is starting to be evident. Pupils who are not working in line



with, or exceeding, their target grades are quickly identified and then interventions are made to support them making better progress.

Pupils know their targets and in many lessons targets are used effectively to identify how well pupils are achieving and what they have to do to improve. Targets are also used effectively to ensure pupils are challenged with their work and staff have high expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve. Displays are used effectively in some classes to support pupils in knowing how to progress and what they are expected to achieve. This is supported by some improved and informative marking. However, the school is aware that there are still inconsistencies with areas of marking which are not as effective and is supporting staff to ensure they know how to improve.

Good progress has been made to improving the quality of teaching. Lesson observations showed that pupils often made good progress because the work was more frequently well matched to pupils' needs. At times teachers also provided differing levels of support or adjusted the extent to which pupils completed exercises to ensure that learning was neither too easy nor difficult. In better lessons, work around the same topic had different starting points and this gave greater challenge at all levels of ability. There is a strong emphasis on using and applying mathematics and experiments in science. This ensures pupils have a variety of opportunities to work collaboratively and solve problems. Pupils also say that they have more opportunities to work in groups within other subjects.

The school has made significant improvements in the areas identified during the last inspection. Additionally attendance has risen and is now above average and the proportion of pupils who have a lot of time off school has reduced markedly. The school has an accurate system for self-evaluation, including inputs from subject leaders. It has worked well with the local authority in developing and implementing a raising achievement plan and responded well to the good support from local authority subject advisers. The drive and ambition for senior leaders is palpable and instrumental in driving the school forward to overcome problems. Leaders are aware of relative weaknesses within teaching and are working effectively to reduce these. This demonstrates an improved capacity 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

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

