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Mrs Helen Miller
Headteacher
Bude Park Primary School
Cookbury Close
Bransholme
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Dear Mrs Miller

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 February 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass my thanks to the staff, governors and pupils who gave up time to talk to me.

Since the school's last inspection in February 2008, the number of pupils on roll has risen. There has been a number of staffing changes and some changes within the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 26–27 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that planning and assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage identifies clearly what is expected of children
- use assessment information more rigorously to plan future learning and ensure all pupils know how to improve their work
- improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning to help all pupils achieve as well as they can
- provide pupils with opportunities to learn about the diversity of British life.



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.

Following an initial decline in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2008, standards have risen steadily. At Key Stage 1, levels of attainment rose to be broadly average in 2009. Results in national tests and assessments at Key Stage 2 in 2009 showed some improvement. However, standards in mathematics and science remained below average. The greatest gains were in English, where standards rose to be broadly in line with national expectations. School tracking data, pupils' work and the lessons observed indicate that this trend of higher attainment continues for the school's current pupils.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. More rigorous assessment procedures have been recently introduced and staff now meet regularly to discuss 'next steps' in children's learning. Planning identifies more clearly what is expected of the children and as a result, children are starting to make faster progress. In addition, staff have worked hard to improve the quality and organisation of the learning activities provided. This is motivating children to explore things for themselves and fostering more positive attitudes to learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving throughout school and, consequently, many pupils are making faster progress than previously. School leaders are keeping a closer check on pupils' progress. Work in English lessons, in particular, is becoming more closely matched to the needs of each pupil because assessment is more accurate. However, assessment information is not always used as effectively as it is in English to pitch work at precisely the correct level in mathematics lessons. There is a greater emphasis on actively engaging pupils in lessons, as teachers encourage them to discuss their learning and provide more activities to get them thinking hard. Marking is now more effective and pupils also have more opportunities to identify the good features of a piece of work for themselves and consider how they can do even better. As a result, many pupils are gaining a clearer view of how to improve their work further. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching remain, especially in the teaching of mathematics. In some lessons the pace of learning remains slower than it should be because the teacher sometimes talks for too long, learning activities often lack the same degree of challenge and sometimes there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and undertake investigations.

The school is steadily providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of life in Britain and overseas. Year 1 pupils are currently engaged in a project with a school in a contrasting area, and the school is in the early stages of establishing links with a school in Gambia. Pupils are developing a better understanding of some issues facing people in other countries and, in particular, actively canvass for more 'Fair Trade' products in their local shops.

Since the last inspection there have been some positive developments in the school's capacity for sustained improvement. More rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning have been adopted. Staff have a greater awareness of how well pupils are doing and greater accountability for the progress they make. School self-evaluation is improving. Well-focused actions to raise attainment in English have had some success and school leaders are currently focused on improving the provision in mathematics further. A revised training programme is helping governors develop the skills to act more effectively as a critical friend to the school. The local authority continues to provide effective support, although the focus of the support is usually instigated by the school itself.

The monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

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

Fiona Gowers
Additional inspector