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Mrs Kate Cooper
Headteacher
Stanford Junior and Infant School
Cooper Lane
Laceby
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North East Lincolnshire
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Dear Mrs Cooper

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 January 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the chair of governors, staff, the local authority representative and the group of pupils who gave up some of their time to meet with me.

There have been some changes to the school's context since the previous inspection in February 2008. A new deputy headteacher and one new teacher have been appointed. A new chair of governors was elected in the autumn of 2009.

As a result of the inspection in February 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve the achievement of more-able pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly in English and science
- ensure that teaching provides appropriate challenge and guidance for all pupils
- develop the skills of subject leaders in order to contribute more fully to raising standards.

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.

From starting points which are wide and varied, but broadly typical for their age, children make a good start in the Reception class. When they join Year 1 their attainment is often above average in most areas of learning. Pupils make largely satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1. However, results in 2009 indicate that attainment at the end of Year 2 declined a little overall. This was related to writing which declined to well below average, particularly for some boys. Improvement at Key Stage 2 has been more evident. Following a decline in 2008, there were considerable gains in 2009. Attainment in English and science improved to broadly average and mathematics improved to above average because of improvement in the proportions attaining at the higher Level 5, particularly in reading and mathematics. Despite these gains, attainment overall would still be described as broadly average. The school has correctly identified that girls do not do as well as boys at the end of Year 6 particularly in mathematics and science. The school is at the early stages of identifying the reasons for this; their questioning of girls suggests that the girls sometimes find it difficult to remember some of the correct mathematical and scientific terminology. The school is only now beginning to address this by raising the profile of mathematics and science vocabulary.

The teaching sampled during the inspection confirmed that there have been some improvements in teachers' planning. The new planning format ensures that they give due regard to at least three ability levels within a class group. However, on some occasions, this often relies more on the use of teaching assistants to support the lower ability groups than on finely tailoring work to the full range of ability groups. Although there were some appropriate examples of pupils being challenged in the observed lessons, some opportunities are still being missed to extend the learning of the most-able. For these reasons, although improving, the quality of teaching still varies. Assessment for learning strategies are being developed soundly. The quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection and in both English and mathematics, teachers are routinely identifying where pupils have achieved the planned learning intention and are suggesting areas for improvement. Pupils talk very positively about how useful they find their teachers' marking. Pupils have targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Although practices vary across the school, pupils generally say that these are helping them to know what they are learning and what they need to do to improve.

The role of subject leaders has been clarified and some good practices are being developed. The core subject (English, mathematics and science) leaders are beginning to work well as a team and are supportive of one another. They have developed their skills in observing their colleagues teaching and record these observations soundly. However, there is scope for the observations of teaching to be more focussed, for example, on the level of challenge for the most-able. Subject leaders are beginning to accurately judge and influence the standards that pupils are reaching along with their progress. They analyse and report their findings to the

headteacher, but this is not always shared with governors. Plans for improvement are sound and identify the most important areas for improvement. The effectiveness of monitoring has improved and now involves the whole of the senior leadership team. However, there is scope to strengthen the relationship between what has been improved and what is being monitored.

Rates of improvement have varied and some improvements have been stronger than others; the school's accurate self-evaluation, the improved tracking of pupils, improvements in marking and target setting demonstrate that the school has made satisfactory progress in developing its capacity for further improvement. The school has valued the support that it has received from the local authority, which continues to provide appropriate, ongoing assistance to the school.

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

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector