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5 February 2010

Mrs K Whitehead
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Whitehead

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 February 2010, for the time you gave to our preparatory discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils who spoke to me and also to the chair of governors.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 February 2008, the school was asked to make the following improvements:

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, by ensuring good progress is the norm.
- Provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and other key skills across different subjects and curriculum projects.
- Ensure many opportunities are provided and expectations are high, to enable older pupils to become good independent learners.

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.

The standard of pupils' work is rising steadily and, despite wide variation, is broadly in line with age-related expectations. Much of the pupils' work is of a very high quality and above the levels expected for their ages, particularly in writing. However, these high standards were not reflected in the most recent national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils' attainment was below the national figures. Although very small cohorts make year-on-year comparisons unreliable, in 2009 the



Year 6 pupils made inadequate progress from their starting points because too few made the expected two levels of progress from the end of Year 2. By comparison, attainment in end of Key Stage 1 assessments is well above the national figures for all subjects. Younger pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 get off to a flying start and make impressive progress in all areas of their learning.

The school has taken suitable steps to enrich the curriculum, to embed literacy, numeracy and other key skills across all subjects and, specifically, to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Observation of lessons shows that pupils of all ages enjoy the opportunity to write creatively and at considerable length in the 'big write' lessons. Preparation for writing is carefully structured, with good opportunities for pupils to rehearse and refine their ideas through structured talk and working in small groups. Most pupils know the level at which they are working and understand how they might improve their work. Expectations are generally high, but assessment information is not consistently well used to set ambitious outcomes for all groups of pupils in each lesson. Moreover, although there are examples of exemplary marking and assessment, older pupils in Class 3 are not always given sufficient guidance on their next steps for improvement. Pupils are often expected to take responsibility for their learning in lessons, but they are not routinely asked to evaluate their own work so that they act on the guidance given and use their short-term targets to check their own work.

The pupils develop good skills in independent learning from an early age. They are given opportunities to work independently and to develop their understanding of topics through working in small groups or with a partner. Teaching assistants understand the learning needs of individual pupils and provide a good balance of support and challenge. Homework has improved, and pupils are encouraged to complete significantly more work at home.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement has been strengthened by recent work on the Raising Attainment Plan. The planned actions and specific success criteria demonstrate a sharper focus on strengthening key aspects of provision that will raise achievement and improve pupils' outcomes. The local authority has supported well the development and implementation of the new plans. There is evidence that the targeted support and interventions have started to accelerate progress for individual pupils, although the impetus to embed ambition and drive improvement for all groups is not yet strong, particularly for the older pupils and individuals most at risk of failure.

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

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector