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Mrs N Wilkinson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Wilkinson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 February 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Thanks also to your governors and teachers who spared the time for a discussion and to the Year 6 pupils who met with me to talk about their work.

Since the last inspection in March 2008, there have been the following contextual changes. Due to the absence of a senior teacher a supply teacher works in Year 6. The membership of the governing body has changed significantly and it has a new chairperson. A link has developed with a partner high school whose staff contribute to the curriculum in several subjects including mathematics, science and physical education. The school has achieved several awards including Healthy School Status in 2008, ActiveMark in 2009 and it gained approval for its Travel Plan in 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 17 and 18 March 2008, the school was asked to improve teaching, learning and the use of assessment to ensure pupils are challenged appropriately, strengthen governor's roles and improve the leadership skills of the newly appointed staff.

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.

Test results show that the standard of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 was average in 2009. Over the past three years, attainment by the end of Year 6 has mainly been average but significantly above average in 2008 in English and above in mathematics. Attainment was also above average in mathematics in 2009 and average in English and science. Current attainment in Year 6 is broadly average and

September 2009



pupils are on track to equal or better the school's performance in 2009. Assessment shows standards in reading are high and while not providing as strong a picture in writing or mathematics, pupils' work in both subjects is of a good quality.

Leadership and management at the top of the school are now good and demonstrating convincingly a greater capacity for continuous improvement. The strong drive for school improvement that had just begun at the time of the last inspection has been sustained with the result that average standards are being maintained and are improving further. The differences in pupils' abilities are managed effectively with the introduction of rigorous assessment and thorough tracking of progress. Pupils are being systematically pushed to achieve as much as they possibly can and this is carried out consistently by all staff. Children make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the strong curriculum and improving quality of teaching, which promote high quality learning. Across the rest of the school pupils make good progress because teaching is now consistently good and demonstrates some outstanding features. The improvement in teaching has come from close monitoring followed by much training and development of teachers' good practice, especially in assessment and implementing successfully a good variety of approaches to learning. Throughout the school, pupils' active involvement in assessing their own progress and managing their learning has produced in them a high level of engagement and sustained effort. Lessons are well planned, lively and enjoyable. Pupils work together in pairs and small groups amiably, purposefully and they behave exceptionally well.

The teaching staff who were newly appointed at the time of the last inspection have become an experienced and effective team. They have collaborated well in planning and are implementing creative and interesting approaches to learning across the curriculum. This is reflected well in the several awards the school has gained. The team has recently taken charge of the core subjects, a further step increasing the impact of their leadership. It also marks senior leaders' recognition of the considerable contribution this group now make to school improvement.

Governors have progressed well from a low base at the time of the last inspection. The governing body has largely been reformed and is actively involved in the work and life of the school. There is a busy programme of monitoring visits and meetings. This, along with very regular updates supplied by the headteacher and staff, keeps governors well-informed and effective in deciding the school's priorities and its strategic direction. Governance has benefitted from much training which has led to their systematic planning and effective committee work, all of which is ensuring governor's responsibilities are fully met. All staff, supply teachers, volunteers and governors have been appropriately vetted to ensure their suitability to work with children and all of the required information is contained in a single central record, in line with recommended practice.

The school improvement partner is an effective source of support to school leadership. Her reports provide valuable analysis of results and the impact new

initiatives have on pupils' attainment, learning and progress, which helps the headteacher as she steers the school in the right direction. The link with the secondary school broadens the appeal of the curriculum and visits by an advanced skills teacher have contributed well to the improvement of teaching.

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

Alan Lemon  
Additional Inspector