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Mrs Susan Williams
Betley CofE VC Primary School
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Dear Mrs Williams

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 phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 20 February 2008, the school was asked to ensure that teaching is consistently challenging and to improve the use of data to identify pupils who need extra support.

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

Attainment is average and improving. It dipped in 2008 but the 2009 Key Stage 2 results show that standards rose sharply and returned to where they were at the last inspection. Current attainment in Year 6, as seen during the visit, shows that pupils are on track to at least equal the school's performance in the 2009 national tests.

The children's knowledge and skills, in the Early Years Foundation Stage are fairly typical of young children. National progress measures are rising and show that, as pupils move through the school, they make steady progress. Since the last inspection the school has improved the way it tracks pupils' progress and sets targets. This information is used well to identify groups of pupils that require extra support. Indeed, a few parents spoken to on the playground remarked that this was a positive development.

The quality of teaching and learning seen during the monitoring inspection was usually satisfactory and sometimes good. Typically pupils showed interest in their work, were articulate and conducted themselves well. Lessons were prepared in detail and good relationships between adults and pupils were evident. Adults

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worked with groups competently and used open-ended questioning techniques well to enable pupils to explain their thinking. Sometimes though, activities were too easy and the pace of lessons slowed when pupils had to sit for too long or wait for instructions from their teacher.

Since the last inspection there has been a determined effort to improve the school. The way that reading, writing and problem solving are taught has undergone review and there are strong indications that assessment is used more effectively. Marking is a strength and the pupils said that it is now more helpful because it shows them what they need to do to improve. They also noted that playground behaviour is better due to the anti-bullying pledge, new play equipment and a rota for football.

The work of the headteacher has been instrumental in putting in place firm building blocks for the school to move forward further. Self-evaluation is reasonably accurate and she has been keen to involve others in monitoring the work of the school. Middle leaders now check the teachers' planning, pupils' books, assessment data and lessons. Indeed during the visit, the headteacher and the numeracy co-ordinator were monitoring mathematics lessons. The next challenge is to make sure that their observations relate to pupils' learning and to target support to areas of the school where it is most needed. The school development plan is a detailed working document which rightly focuses on raising standards. However, quantifiable success criteria to determine the school's ambitions are not always clear. The school has paid thorough attention to carrying out all of the required safeguarding checks on staff, governors, volunteers and visitors.

The headteacher has been grateful for the support received from the local authority advisors in monitoring the work of the school and securing better teaching. This has given her confidence to secure her own vision for 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

Anne Pitt
Her Majesty's Inspector