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Mrs J Stanley-Bell  
Headteacher  
Wickham Market Primary School  
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Wickham Market  
Woodbridge  
IP13 0RP

Dear Mrs Stanley-Bell

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 also pass on my thanks to the pupils for their help during the inspection and to the groups of parents and governors for taking time to meet me to discuss their views of the school's progress since the last inspection.

The number on roll has fallen in the last two years as fewer children are living in the school's catchment area. Four new teachers have joined the school since the last inspection and key leadership and management responsibilities have been redistributed.

As a result of the inspection on 27 February 2008, the school was asked to raise standards, particularly in reading and mathematics, and ensure all pupils make good progress; sharpen the approach to marking pupils' work and raise expectations for the quality of presentation; extend links with parents to enable them to become more involved and active partners in their children's learning; and, strengthen the role played by the governors in challenging the school to improve.

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.

Pupils' achievement continues to be satisfactory. Attainment has improved well in Key Stage 1 in the last two years. In 2009 teachers' assessments in reading, writing and mathematics show that pupils' attainment was a little above average. This represents good progress from below average starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Improvements in attainment in Key Stage 1 have yet to impact on



outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2, where attainment remains below average. Year 6 results in science were broadly average last year; they were below average in English and well below average in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 did comparatively better than similar pupils nationally but those in Year 6 did not. The school acknowledges that although most Year 6 pupils made satisfactory progress, there was still a sizeable minority who did not make the expected two levels progress in English and mathematics from their starting points in Year 2.

Pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory overall, but remain too variable. A recently strengthened attainment tracking system and regular progress meetings held between senior leaders and teachers have sharpened the focus on identifying underachievement. Greater emphasis is now placed on targeting additional support for the year groups that have more pupils who need to catch up. Intervention programmes and good quality classroom support are beginning to have an impact on accelerating progress. Improvements in subject leadership, the introduction of a revised calculation policy and positive developments in assessing pupils' performance have laid the foundation for much better achievement in mathematics. Learning and progress for pupils in Year 6 are good and the school's data show that they are on track to meet their attainment targets and achieve better results this year. Year 6 pupils' motivation, enjoyment of learning and commitment towards improving their performances are demonstrated by their high levels of attendance in a weekly after-school revision club.

Pupils' attendance continues to be above average and punctuality has improved following the introduction of a popular before-school 'toast club'. Behaviour in the lessons observed during the monitoring inspection was very good and exclusion rates have fallen significantly this year. In October 2009 following a subject survey inspection, weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements were reported. These have been resolved and recording procedures now meet government requirements.

Teaching is improving and having a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Training for teachers on the effective assessment of pupils' progress has resulted in more sharply focussed lesson planning and much tighter differentiation. Teachers' marking has improved and matches more closely the school's recently revised marking policy. Greater emphasis is placed on confirming learning outcomes and guiding improvements. A scrutiny of a sample of pupils' mathematics books revealed improvements also in pupils' presentation.

Outstanding, good and satisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Where teaching was outstanding, pupils were highly motivated, fully engaged and keen to succeed; they made excellent progress. Activities were sharply focussed on the learning objectives that best matched pupils' own assessments of the next steps in their learning. Challenging questioning extended pupils' thinking and frequent opportunities for paired discussion kept everyone involved. High quality teaching in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is enabling pupils to reach the challenging

targets set for them at the start of the year. The school acknowledges that further improvements are required in the overall quality of teaching if all pupils are to make good progress. Sharper differentiation during whole class teaching and providing suitably challenging activities for higher ability pupils were aspects of the other lessons observed that required improvement.

Leadership and management have been strengthened by improvements in governance. Governors have become much more active in finding out about how well the school is doing. Training has been completed on governing body effectiveness and on understanding attainment and progress data. Governors have made more frequent visits to the school to meet pupils on the school council and to collect the views of parents at consultation evenings. They have also established a more systematic approach to undertaking and reporting their visits to school events. Links with subject leaders and the setting up of a pupil progress committee have increased opportunities for discussing the impact of the school's work and for challenging leaders to bring about further improvements.

Engagement with parents is building steadily and those interviewed during the inspection were very positive about how well the school communicates with them. The appointment of a very effective learning mentor has made a significant difference to the support provided for a small number of pupils with social and emotional needs and their families. A room in the school has been set up to make available a base for parents to meet before or after school events. Some parents have attended a workshop on the teaching of phonics and there are promising plans in place to involve parents more in their children's learning by coming to events in a mathematics week and through helping to set up an orienteering course.

The local authority has given the school satisfactory support. Progress since the inspection has been appropriately monitored by the school's link adviser and school improvement partner. The link adviser has provided helpful guidance on managing improvements and the monitoring programme has included observations of lessons to confirm the school's judgements on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress.

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

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector