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Mr A Fullagar
Headteacher
Richard Alibon Primary School with ARP for Cognitive and Learning Difficulties: SEN
Base
Alibon Road
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Dear Mr Fullagar

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 March 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please also pass my thanks to the pupils, vice-chair of governors, and senior and middle leaders who spoke with me.

Since the previous inspection, four members of staff have left and the long-serving headteacher retired. You took over as headteacher the term following the inspection. A newly qualified teacher joined the school last year and another this year.

As a result of the inspection on 17 March 2008, the school was asked to:

- increase the proportion of good teaching in order to accelerate progress and raise standards
- ensure that subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school with the same rigour as the leaders for English, mathematics and science, in order to raise standards further
- provide more opportunities for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to learn independently or in small groups and use their initiative.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

inadequate progress in making improvements

and

inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Overall attainment by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 has fluctuated since the previous inspection and remains below average. Improvements made in English in 2009 were not mirrored in mathematics and there was a decline in science. The school's own monitoring information indicates that, although pupils are currently on track to meet their English targets, they are not in mathematics. This is a similar position to last year. Overall, all groups of pupils, including the more able, make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. However, evidence from lessons observed, an analysis of the school's tracking information and scrutiny of books shows that the rate of progress pupils make in different classes and subjects is too variable. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent and there are too many lessons which are inadequate. The school's monitoring records and lessons seen show that the proportion of good teaching is not increasing enough to accelerate the progress that pupils make and raise attainment consistently.

In the most effective lessons, teachers use assessment information well to provide varied activities that are matched carefully to pupils' different needs. Teachers check throughout the lesson that pupils understand what they are learning so that any misconceptions are spotted and corrected quickly. Skilful questioning engages pupils and challenges them to explain their ideas and develop their learning further so they achieve well. However, these are not consistent features of enough lessons. Where learning is less effective, pupils of different abilities are given the same work to do or work that does not build effectively on what they already know and can do. Consequently, some find it too easy and others too difficult. Pupils noted that, although they enjoy their lessons, 'sometimes our teachers work with the same children every day and not with others who also need help'. When teachers talk for too long in lessons, there are missed opportunities to involve pupils and develop their independence, so some lose concentration and the progress they make is limited. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups but this is not consistently well-planned or monitored during lessons to ensure that all pupils are participating fully in the activity or working at an appropriately challenging pace, including the more able. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in each lesson and give them clear criteria by which they can measure their success. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to evaluate their own learning and that of their peers but this is not yet fully embedded throughout the school.

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, but the pace of change has been too slow for the school to demonstrate that it has a better capacity for sustained improvement. The progress that pupils make is tracked systematically. Regular meetings with teachers have been introduced to discuss pupils' progress, which is linked to performance management so that staff can be held to account more robustly. Necessary steps are being taken to manage underperformance and plans are being developed to strengthen the senior leadership team. There have been changes to the leadership of different subjects since the previous inspection and many are new to their role.



Subject leaders are now working together in teams and systems are being put in place for them to monitor the quality of provision in the subjects they lead. External support through London Challenge has recently been secured to help improve the consistency of teaching and develop the skills of leaders at all levels. However, much has been introduced recently and is still too new to demonstrate an impact on making improvements in the areas identified at the previous inspection. The school's development plan includes the right priorities and some quantifiable measures of success, but the lack of clear milestones against which to evaluate the progress being made is not supporting more rapid improvement.

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

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector