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Mrs Lyn Downes  
The Headteacher  
Burnham Copse Primary School  
Newchurch Road  
Tadley  
Hampshire  
RG26 4HN

Dear Mrs Downes

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 April 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my sincere thanks to the staff, governors and pupils with whom I held discussions.

Since the previous inspection, this primary school has moved into the spacious, revamped, old junior school accommodation. The headteacher is currently on secondment to another school, although she makes regular visits to Burnham Copse, and was present during this monitoring visit.

As a result of the inspection on 7 and 8 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve pupils' achievement and standards, especially in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1, and in English and science in Key Stage 2
- raise the achievement of boys through further improvements to teaching and the curriculum in order to sustain their interest in learning
- raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, by ensuring that all pupils are provided with tasks that are well matched to their needs, and work productively within time limits.

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.

Assessments at the end of Year 2 since the previous inspection show that attainment in writing has remained broadly average and that pupils achieve satisfactorily. Gains made in 2008 were not sustained in 2009, largely due to no pupils reaching higher than expected levels, caused in part by inaccuracies in assessment at this time.



Improvements in the accuracy and regularity of assessment show that attainment in writing in the current year is likely to be broadly average. Improvements in the leadership and management of mathematics and a greater emphasis on investigational work are helping to raise attainment and progress in this subject.

National testing at the end of Key Stage 2 shows that attainment in English has steadily increased in recent years and is broadly average. It likewise shows some improvement in achievement from the significantly low levels recorded in 2007 and 2008. This year, a greater than average proportion is on track to reach higher than expected levels. The school has rightly identified the importance of reading, along with more opportunities for speaking and listening, in providing a stimulus for writing throughout the school. Improvements have been made in reading through the improved use of assessment and greater encouragement for pupils to read at home, shown in the good progress pupils make in this subject. As a result, pupils are becoming keener writers and the content of their written work is often thoughtful and imaginative. Staff training in teaching and assessing reading and writing, along with initiatives such as 'every child a writer', have also contributed to improvements in English. Nevertheless, learning and progress in writing, although improving, remain inconsistent throughout the school.

Attainment in science is improving due to the increased challenge posed to pupils through an investigative approach to the subject. This was observed in a Year 5/6 lesson on the separation of materials, where pupils were acting as detectives and using chromatography to identify the ink used in a sample of writing. The imaginative development of a science park on the site of the disused swimming pool is set to add further impetus to this investigative approach.

Pupils greatly appreciate the room and facilities now provided by the school, and the learning opportunities provided. Topics, such as 'cogs, axles and wheels' and 'World War II' as part of the school's creative curriculum, are providing exciting and relevant learning opportunities, which all, especially boys, say they enjoy. A lesson observed showed pupils' enthusiasm in finding out about the Blitz; it confirmed their comments about liking to work independently, and the eagerness with which they approach writing tasks. Such approaches, along with the careful monitoring of pupils' progress, are ensuring that boys are now achieving as well as girls.

Further improvements have been made to the accuracy and regularity of assessments on pupils' progress and procedures for tracking and recording these. Consequently, the school has a clearer picture of how well pupils are doing and is now in a position to identify and address underachievement more quickly. Teachers are making better use of this information to match work to pupils' levels of ability, so that pupils are increasingly challenged in their learning and achieving more in lessons. However, the level of challenge is occasionally not well matched to pupils' needs. This was seen in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, where less able pupils, especially, needed to understand the concept of ten before ordering tens and units. The school's own monitoring of the quality of teaching shows that this is improving, with none less than satisfactory, and about two fifths being good or better. The

school has yet to fully relate the quality of teaching to some inconsistency in the levels of pupils' progress.

Since the previous inspection, professional development has enabled subject leaders to develop their roles and become more accountable for learning and progress in their particular areas. Governors now have a fuller understanding of the school's performance and are in a stronger position to challenge the school on its performance.

The local authority has provided good advisory support for the school's actions to raise achievement and standards in science through an investigative approach to learning.

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

Peter Thrussell  
Additional Inspector