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Ms H Overton
The Gateway Primary School
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Dear Ms Overton

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and governors gave during the monitoring visit of your school on 4 February 2010.

When the school was last inspected it was found to be satisfactory, with pupils doing especially well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress between Years 3 and 6 was identified as being uneven. As a result of the inspection on 6-7 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise attainment in Key Stage 2 by making sure that consistent progress is maintained through Years 3 to 6, especially for the more able pupils in mathematics and science
- improve teaching by making better use of assessments to ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' capabilities so all of them make good progress
- evaluate pupils' progress more rigorously to determine the impact of teaching on achievement and to set more challenging targets
- develop subject leaders' roles so they play a full part in raising achievement.

Having considered all of 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 in the future.

Since the last inspection, there have been some difficulties with recruitment of new staff and this has slowed developments and progress. Attainment fell in 2008 because of



weak performance in mathematics and science. In 2009, attainment improved in mathematics but was still too low in science because the most able pupils did not reach higher levels of attainment. Leaders and the local authority analysed exactly what needed to be done to improve and have taken decisive action as a result. Observations of progress in lessons and the school's assessment information show that attainment and teaching are improving. Pupils are on track to reach the expected level by the summer of 2010. In particular, higher-ability pupils are doing much better. Leaders have set ambitious and achievable targets. These features contribute to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Since the beginning of 2009, progress for pupils in Key Stage 2 has accelerated rapidly. With the headteacher, the newly appointed mathematics, science and English leaders have been driving improvements well. There is a strong team ethos, clear vision and a clear commitment to improving provision and outcomes for pupils. The 'Leading for Impact' training has helped leaders to become more effective in the way that they evaluate the work of the school. This has led to clearer development planning with a very strong emphasis on improving teaching and attainment.

There is a growing proportion of good lessons in Key Stage 2. Teachers and leaders are effectively involved in checking how well pupils learn. They make good use of assessment information to help them to set challenging targets and plan pupils' learning from day to day and over the term. Most teachers are providing pupils with activities that meet their different abilities well. However, this is not yet fully consistent. Regular progress meetings are enabling pupils, including the most able, to achieve better so that they make at least satisfactory progress between Years 3 to 6. Any pupil who has not made the progress that is expected is given specific extra help. There are improved opportunities for mental arithmetic and problem solving and investigation in both science and mathematics.

The lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 fully support the view that teaching is improving. In a good mathematics lesson, higher-ability pupils worked on challenging calculations and ideas to design pipe work to irrigate a part of the rainforest. The work in books shows that pupils are not as skilled at recording their ideas in a step-by-step way. Leaders check pupils' books regularly and understand how well they are learning and what needs to be done to improve. Leaders have increased opportunities for the subject managers to work with teachers in lessons. This is having a good impact, as seen in science when pupils explored how air resistance, gravity, shape, surface area, weight and weather conditions can vary the performance of a spinning object.

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

Wendy Simmons
Additional inspector

