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25 June 2010

Ms Wendy Tracey  
Headteacher  
Cherry Fold Community Primary School  
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Dear Ms Tracey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 June 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit.

Since the last inspection three teachers have left and three have joined the school, including one senior leader. There have also been a few changes in teaching assistants. One teacher is providing temporary cover for a teacher who is working for the local authority. There is still a high turnover of pupils leaving and arriving at school before the end of Key Stage 2. This is exacerbated by significant changes to the housing stock in the local area. There has been a small increase in the proportion of pupils who have a minority ethnic heritage.

As a result of the inspection on 03–04 July 2008, the school was asked to do these things.

- Raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise the quality of all teaching and learning to that of the best, particularly in relation to the level of challenge for pupils.
- Develop the use of assessment in lessons so that pupils have a better understanding of what they are doing and what they need to do 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' attainment has improved slightly since the last inspection. Over the last four years there has been a gradual increase in the standards pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics and the school's data indicate this trend is continuing. The gap between standards at the school and the national average is closing. In 2009 by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment rose significantly in mathematics and in science. In English, however, standards continued to decline. There are indications in pupils' work and in the school's assessment information that standards for the current Year 6 are higher and there is a higher proportion of pupils on track to attain the higher Level 5.

Pupils' work and the school's assessment information indicate that a significant proportion of pupils are now making accelerated progress. A greater proportion of pupils are on track to make two levels of progress and to exceed challenging targets. A significant group of pupils in some classes, however, are not making the progress they are capable of. In the six lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' progress and learning was good in two and satisfactory in four. In the satisfactory lessons pupils were sitting passively listening to the teacher and answered a very small number of questions. In the better lessons, pupils were active throughout, answered more questions and the activities were designed to make them think and to explain their reasoning. Teachers made clear to pupils what they expected them to do by the end of the lessons and what they needed to do to improve their work. During the lessons, however, some opportunities were missed to monitor learning in the class and to ensure that all pupils were being challenged. A scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that pupils' progress is being hampered because they are asked to complete very low-level tasks and complete worksheets which hinder their ability to extend their thinking and writing skills. Activities in some lessons and classes are not challenging enough.

Senior leaders have increased the frequency of formal assessment meetings with teachers to check the progress of pupils in the class. They have also provided training to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are more accurate. Senior leaders have built the school's capacity to improve by involving subject leaders and middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. They use a good range of information to help them evaluate the impact of the school's provision such as lesson observations, discussions with pupils, work scrutiny, observations by representatives from the local authority and an analysis of assessment information. There is scope to focus some of the evaluations more sharply on pupils' learning and progress than on teaching. The raising attainment and improvement plan is satisfactory. There is, however, an over-emphasis on initiatives at the expense of a sharper focus on pupils' learning and the activities they complete in lessons. The local authority has gathered a team of people around the school to help it out of its difficulties. They have had a satisfactory impact on raising the quality of pupils' outcomes. The school remains in a vulnerable position and there is a danger of it falling into a category of concern in the future if senior

leaders cannot raise the level of pupils' attendance and the progress they make in lessons.

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

Allan Torr  
Her Majesty's Inspector