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Thursday 29 April 2010

Mrs Dorcas Jennings
North Wingfield Primary School
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Dear Mrs Jennings

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 28 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 thanks to the staff and Chair of Governors for their time and courtesy. I would like to particularly thank the pupils for the enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the school's last inspection, there have been several staffing changes, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher in January 2010.

As a result of the inspection on 31 April – 1 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that all teachers consistently challenge pupils to achieve well
- develop the curriculum to ensure the progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in all subject
- train curriculum leaders and managers to monitor and evaluate performance more rigorously to quicken the pace of improvement
- make sure that all pupils understand their learning targets and help them to gain the skills to evaluate their own success.

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.

My visits to a sample of lessons confirmed that the school's analysis of information on pupils' performance is accurate and shows that overall, attainment is improving steadily. Pupils are making good progress in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. However, at Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory. This is because a legacy of underachievement which means that pupils, particularly those in Year 5 and Year 6, have more catching up to do. Although attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1



and Key Stage 2 is currently below average, the gap between school and national averages is narrowing.

These improvements are as a direct result of improvements in teaching and learning. Both external and internal professional development has been used to help teachers improve the pace and challenge of lessons, and encourage them to provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion during their lessons. Teachers have higher expectations of their pupils, both in terms of behaviour and performance. Teachers plan lessons that have a range of suitably challenging activities to meet the different needs of pupils. The pace of learning is generally brisk and more lessons are now of good quality. Pupils respond well in lessons by trying to do their best, particularly where they are given opportunities to work together and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are proud of their work and keen to show what they can do. Behaviour in all the lessons visited was good. Teaching assistants offer good academic guidance as well as pastoral support.

Improvements in teaching and learning are supported by improved assessment strategies. Pupils know their targets and teachers make effective use of appropriate learning objectives and success criteria. However, only a minority of teachers encourage pupils to discuss what they are learning with each other and provide opportunities for them to assess their own and other pupils' work. Consequently, they do not always understand what they have to do to improve their learning. There are some good examples of marking which is clearly focused on areas to improve.

A satisfactory start has been made to improving the quality of the curriculum. The focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills reflects the school's priorities. Pupils are being given the opportunity to develop their basic skills, knowledge and understanding in a more progressive way. While changes to the curriculum are still in the early stages of development, there is evidence that these are already having a positive impact on improving pupils' motivation as staff are trying to plan more creatively and flexibly, based on children's interests. Additionally, pupils spoke enthusiastically about special curriculum events, such as the maths week and Chinese day, which provide good opportunities for cross-curricular working.

The school is clearly focussed on improving learning and achievement. Good progress has been made in ensuring that middle leaders take a more strategic view of their areas of responsibility. Curriculum leaders demonstrate a greater understanding of their work in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education. They have a much sharper focus on tracking pupils' progress over time and set targets which are suitably challenging. Governors are beginning to extend their understanding of the school and following recent training, demonstrate that they are more able to challenge the school in their role as critical friends.

The school is well supported by the local authority. Support is provided as appropriate and is helping the school to maintain improvements.

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

Dorothy Bathgate

Her Majesty's Inspector