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Mrs Cathryn Downing
Headteacher
Stamford Park Junior School
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Dear Mrs Downing

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 December 2009 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to your chair of governors, pupils and the local authority head of school improvement service who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 16 and 17 September 2009, the school was given a notice to improve because the single central record of safeguarding checks made on the staff did not fully meet requirements. It was asked to make the following improvements in this respect: ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met, that care, guidance and support are improved and that the governing body fulfils its statutory duties by completing required records with all the necessary information.

The school was given three further points for improvement: to raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by ensuring that teachers plan work that stimulates, challenges and enthuses pupils; to improve the quality of the curriculum from satisfactory to good by planning a curriculum which encourages independent learning and creativity and which closely matches all pupils needs in all areas; and to develop the school's wider contribution to community cohesion.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The single central record (SCR) fully meets all requirements and the school ensures that all adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and vetted. The SCR



clearly indicates that all the mandatory checks on staff, volunteers and others who regularly work with children at the school have been carried out. There are robust policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, which are reviewed annually. All school staff have attended relevant training in safeguarding and child protection and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Links with social care and other agencies are well established and the school identifies and refers any concerns promptly. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure the security of the school site and to monitor visitors. The appointment of a safeguarding governor and attendance at safer recruitment training has strengthened governors' understanding of their role in safeguarding. The governing body is fulfilling all its statutory duties and is seeking to further improve its contribution to school improvement through a range of training, closer work with staff and improved communication with parents.

All of these procedures together with the positive relationships and caring ethos of the school mean that pupils feel safe and well cared for. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and are confident that adults will deal fairly and effectively with any concerns or issues they raise. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite and considerate toward each other and highly motivated to do their best. Their positive attitudes help them to attain highly and make good progress across the school. Their attainment in end of Year 6 tests is consistently well above the national average. However, their rate of progress in lessons is variable because some teaching is not as well matched to their learning needs, interests and skills as it could be.

School leaders have taken steps to tackle the weaker aspects of teaching and curriculum planning identified in the last inspection but it is not possible to discern the full impact of changes in such a short time. Teachers have enthusiastically introduced a skills based, thematic approach to curriculum planning, building in opportunities for pupils to apply their skills, think creatively and learn independently. Pupils say they are thoroughly enjoying lessons where they can undertake a range of activities and participate in debate and role play. School leaders are aware of the need to closely monitor and review provision to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress in all aspects of their learning and the curriculum retains breadth and balance. Appropriate plans to introduce more thorough approaches to assessment and tracking pupils' progress are also under way but are not yet implemented consistently across the whole school.

The local authority has produced a comprehensive action plan to work alongside the school to improve provision and has provided good support to date. The school has tackled the weakness which led to the notice to improve and is taking steps to improve the quality of teaching and curriculum planning from satisfactory to good. Governors and school leaders are well placed to bring about these improvements and have the full support and commitment of staff.



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

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector

