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20 May 2010

Mrs Jose Hodgkins
Headteacher
Petteril Bank School
Burnett Road
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Cumbria
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Dear Mrs Hodgkins

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 19 May 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. I also welcomed the opportunity to hold conversations with staff, pupils, the chair of governors and local authority school improvement partner.

There has been relatively little staffing change since the last inspection. One new class teacher has been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 29 and 30 September 2009, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in all subjects and particularly in writing and improve the rate of progress made by all pupils in their learning so that they achieve in line with their capabilities
- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently at least good. Ensure that all teachers:
 - make good use of assessment information so that when lessons are being planned the needs of all pupils are understood and catered for
 - make certain that lesson organisation matches the learning needs of pupils and that all adults are deployed effectively to meet these needs
- achieve consistency in the verbal and written feedback given to pupils so that they are clear about how well they have done and what is required to make further progress towards meeting their targets.



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

The school's own data shows that attainment, although improving, remains below average across year groups. Standards remain lower in writing than in reading and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. Through tracking pupils' progress the school demonstrates that there is a steady increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels for their age. Consequently, pupils' achievement is also improving. The main reasons for this are: improvements in the quality of teaching, lesson planning which now takes more account of pupils' prior attainment, more effective deployment of support staff in lessons and rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupil progress led by the headteacher.

An effective pupil progress tracking system has been introduced. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is assessed each half term. The local authority School Improvement Partner and external consultants have supported the process to help ensure that assessments are accurate. The headteacher holds regular meetings with each teacher to ensure every child is making the expected progress. Where under-achievement is identified, the school provides intensive and sustained support for pupils on an individual basis or within small groups. Examination of progress records and observations of lessons and support sessions show that the system is beginning to bear fruit and the school's latest assessment information indicates that most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making better progress.

A more formal monitoring and evaluation system has been implemented since the previous inspection. As well as looking at learning in lessons, leaders regularly sample teachers' planning and pupils' work in their books to check that teachers make good use of assessment information to ensure that the needs of all pupils are catered for and to identify where individual learning support is needed. The headteacher and senior leaders have carried out a series of comprehensive lesson observations which provide an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence from this monitoring visit confirms that the proportion of good or better teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers receive sharply focused feedback on the quality of pupils' learning which includes its strengths and areas for development. The school has reviewed its system for deploying support staff and has been particularly successful in making certain that all adults are used effectively to meet pupils' needs. Class teachers and support staff work closely together to implement support programmes and in monitoring the progress of individual and groups of pupils. Support staff are more skilled in delivering literacy and numeracy programmes, they use their time and resources well to promote learning and contribute effectively to the assessment of gains in pupils' learning.



The school is achieving greater consistency in the quality of verbal and written feedback that teachers give to pupils about their work. Teachers give pupils praise and encouragement. In most classes, the marking in pupils' books relates to the learning objectives for the lessons and enables the pupils to evaluate how well they have done and how they are progressing. However, teachers do not routinely set out what pupils need to do to improve. Work in pupils' books shows that the quality and quantity of work has improved considerably since the last inspection, though not all teachers have high expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work. Teachers give pupils more opportunities to speak in lessons. For example, they use 'talk partners' and 'hot seating' to promote speaking for a purpose, to develop pupils' confidence and to promote their thinking skills. However, teachers do not use lesson summaries sufficiently well to enable pupils to demonstrate what they have learned in lessons and to help themselves plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

The headteacher continues to provide purposeful and focused leadership. Staff work well as a team and morale is high. The local authority's statement of action meets requirements. The local authority has provided a wide range of good-quality support for the school. The impact of this has been seen in improvements in, for instance, the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and the deployment and active involvement of support staff in improving learning. The School Improvement Partner provides challenge and support to the school and has been influential in improving provision.

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

Stephen Fisher
Additional Inspector