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Ms Ann Berresford
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Berresford

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 2 March 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to the governors who came into school to meet me.

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school since the last inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 16 October 2009, the school was asked to improve safeguarding procedures, outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement in mathematics and the systems for monitoring the impact of the school's plans and policies.

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 pupils' achievement.

National results in 2009 showed that pupils in Year 6 made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. There was a slight improvement in their progress in mathematics and in the proportion that reached Level 5 in this subject. However, the school's assessments show that some higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have to make accelerated progress if the school's predictions for those gaining Level 5 are to be met this year.

The weaknesses in safeguarding were a main priority on this visit. Well-targeted support from local authority services has led to a clearer understanding of the roles



and responsibilities of leaders and governors with regard to safeguarding pupils' welfare. Recent governing body's minutes show that safeguarding is now regularly discussed and that governors are developing their role in challenging the school's leaders and holding them to account for safeguarding policies and practices.

Since the last inspection, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding has undertaken relevant training and has visited other schools to explore good practice. He has made a good start in ensuring that all safeguarding policies are in place and are well organised. However, some are not yet dated nor formally signed off and parents do not have easy access to all policies.

All staff have received the required training in child protection, including the headteacher, the designated member of staff with this specific responsibility. The headteacher has improved the procedures for recording concerns relating to individual pupils, which are being followed consistently by staff. Scrutiny of a sample of pupils' records shows that concerns are appropriately documented with, for example, key action points and review dates. Arrangements are now in place to ensure that confidentiality is observed and that records are stored securely. Two members of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have undertaken the necessary paediatric first-aid training and the school now complies with the welfare requirements in this respect.

The school has rightly concentrated on addressing the issues relating to safeguarding over the last four months. Some steps have been taken to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics and outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Up to now, these have largely centred on advice and support from the local authority, which the school's leaders have valued. An audit has been carried out for the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reception staff have visited another school where good provision has been identified. This has provided a good foundation for the school to improve the outdoor area, in line with its action plan.

Observations of mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2 show that the actions taken have not yet had a clear impact on the quality of teaching and learning because some inconsistencies remain. Pupils continue to learn effectively when tasks are interesting and provide them with opportunities to investigate and solve problems. In these cases, pupils know what they are learning and what they are trying to achieve. Teachers are aware of the need to keep lessons moving at a pace but this sometimes leads them to move on too quickly, without checking that all groups of pupils understand and learn. During whole-class sessions, some teachers spend too much time talking, missing opportunities to involve the pupils, for example, by asking them to explain how they have worked out a calculation or to share their thinking. The effectiveness of learning support partners also remains variable and there are occasions when support staff give pupils too much direction, preventing them from learning for themselves. The headteacher acknowledges this and plans



are in place to provide training for the support staff, to enable them to have a greater impact on pupils' learning.

Systems for monitoring the impact of plans and policies are developing, particularly with regard to safeguarding. However, senior leaders have not yet introduced more robust and regular monitoring to improve the consistency in teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics.

The local authority's statement of action was evaluated prior to the visit and judged to meet requirements. Support from the local authority has been well focused and has had a particularly positive impact on the improvements in safeguarding. The local authority's strategy group, responsible for monitoring the school's progress, has met once since the inspection. Minutes show all four improvement areas were reviewed appropriately. They also highlighted, rightly, the need to focus now on the progress made in improving leaders' monitoring and evaluation, particularly in relation to pupils' learning and progress.

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

Margaret Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector