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Mrs Elizabeth Turton
Headteacher
Chapel End Primary School
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Dear Mrs Turton

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 15 June 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my particular thanks to the governors who came into school to meet with me and to the pupils for their friendly and courteous welcome.

The deputy headteacher has left the school since the last inspection and this role is currently fulfilled by an acting deputy headteacher.

As a result of the inspection on 20 and 21 October 2009, the school was asked to:

- improve the achievement of the more able pupils, particularly in writing and especially at Key Stage 2, by improving the consistency of teaching, ensuring greater rigour in the monitoring of lessons and by making better use of assessment information to track pupils' progress
- ensure that governors hold leaders more fully to account for improvement and pupils' achievement
- meet legal requirements to promote 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 achievement of all pupils in English and mathematics has increased since the last inspection. In particular, pupils' writing shows significant signs of improvement. Accurate and rigorous assessment has enabled the school to identify weaknesses in pupils' written work. This has been followed by marked improvements in the opportunities for all pupils to write in a range of different styles. Pupils now write more fluently and at greater length. This is also underpinned by better teaching of spelling and punctuation, which has enhanced pupils' progress in these basic skills. Raised expectations of what pupils can achieve have boosted the attainment of pupils, especially the more able. As a result, early indications from assessments this summer term indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing at the end of both Years 2 and 6 has approximately doubled since 2009. In lessons pupils' attitudes to writing are more positive. Opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups have increased their involvement and enjoyment. For example, Year 6 pupils eagerly considered and justified to their peers what they might take to survive on a deserted island. Greater use of open-ended tasks is also improving team work and discussion as shown when a Year 4 class framed their own questions to ask what a graph of the number of gold medals gained by different countries in the Olympic Games might show.

Teaching is of a consistently better quality than at the last inspection. In all the lessons seen, teachers ensured greater challenge for more able pupils. Lessons are increasingly characterised by a faster pace and by higher expectations due to more effective planning. Because assessments are increasingly reliable, teachers have a sharper understanding of how to match work to pupils' needs and of how to stretch the more able. Marking is considerably more informative, thorough and consistent throughout the school. All pupils from the youngest to the oldest now receive helpful feedback on what they have done well and on how to improve their work. This is accelerating their progress. Where teaching is of a considerably higher standard, there are carefully planned opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. This is effectively raising the attainment of the more able pupils in English in Year 2. However, greater scope remains for sharing this exemplary practice, so that it can be adopted more consistently in all classes throughout the school.

These rapid improvements have been supported by more rigorous monitoring by senior leaders. Consequently, weaknesses have been identified and rectified. Closer and sharper tracking procedures have enabled quicker identification of groups of pupils who are underachieving. Improvements established since January 2010 have accelerated pupils' progress, particularly that of the more able. The raising attainment plan, which is reviewed regularly, is an example of better improvement planning. It has ensured a greater understanding that is shared among senior leaders and governors, of the effects of the different actions they have taken.

Since the inspection in October 2009, governors have increasingly held the school to account. Effective training in the interpretation of attainment data has helped them to probe beneath the overall picture of above average attainment. Consequently, they are now better placed to recognise the underachievement of particular groups



Through involvement in scrutiny of pupils' work and support in lessons, governors are clearer about what can be expected of pupils. This has helped them to provide stronger challenge to the school on raising achievement, particularly that of the more able pupils. The governors' strategy group has proved especially effective in asking more exacting questions and in monitoring more closely to secure school improvement.

The extent to which the school promotes community cohesion has improved and now meets legal requirements. Governors have received training in this area and so are now more aware of these requirements. An audit has been completed and the plan which outlines the actions to be taken has been revised. Steady progress has been made in implementing changes to this aspect of the school's work. Although some initiatives involving links with other schools have extended pupils' experiences and understanding of the different cultures in Britain, the school recognises that there remains more to do.

The revised local authority statement of action is now fit for the purpose of securing the necessary improvements and is linked with the raising attainment plan. This plan effectively integrates the school's own planning for improvement with the local authority's support. Good focused support from local authority consultants, working in partnership with the school, has been a significant factor in securing higher achievement, particularly of the more able pupils. A National Leader in Education has worked with senior leaders to increase the effectiveness of monitoring of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress. Recommendations which were identified by a local authority review of the school's work in January have been addressed successfully. The overview of the school improvement adviser has been key in coordinating the different elements of local authority support in order to secure the good progress in improvement to date.

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

Liz Godman
Additional Inspector