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14 July 2010

Mr Patrick Fielding
Headteacher
Cantrell Primary and Nursery School
Cantrell Road
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Dear Mr Fielding

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 Tuesday 13 July 2010 with my colleague Joy Law HMI and for the information which you provided during our visit. I was grateful for the time you gave to meeting with us on the afternoon before the inspection and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please pass on our thanks to the pupils, staff and members of the governing body with whom we met and staff and pupils who talked with us during the day.

Since the last inspection, the substantive headteacher has resigned. From April 2010, the school has been led and managed by an interim headteacher seconded from a neighbouring school. High levels of staff absence have caused some interruption to pupils' learning. New teaching staff have been recruited and a full complement of teachers will be in place from September 2010. Some disruption has been caused by the construction of a children's centre on the school site. The nursery is currently operating in the school hall which means that assemblies and physical education lessons are taught in other locations around the school.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 November 2009, the school was asked to

- Raise attainment and improve achievement, especially in English and mathematics.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better throughout the school.
- Make monitoring and evaluation rigorous at all levels, including by the governing body, to ensure that teaching and pupils' learning improve at a much faster pace than at present.

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.



Following the appointment of the interim headteacher the pace of change has gathered momentum. Under his strong leadership, staff and governors have been galvanised. They share a strong commitment to driving the school forward and are now striving for success. Appropriate actions are being taken to target and secure school improvement. Leaders and managers have a more accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A systematic approach to monitoring aspects of the school has been established. Evaluation is becoming more rigorous and findings are increasingly being used to address areas of weakness. Recently appointed subject leaders have constructed suitable development plans but they lack precision in identifying clear outcome targets and specifying the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluation. Governors are increasingly holding senior leaders to account. Each governor is matched to an identified subject leader and this is increasing their understanding and awareness of what is happening in school. The single central record satisfactorily meets requirements.

Robust assessment systems have been established. School leaders now have a more accurate picture of pupils' achievement. Regular pupil progress meetings are beginning to hold staff to account for attainment in each class. Teachers are increasing their knowledge of assessment and their understanding of what pupils should be attaining and are beginning to use this knowledge to plan lessons which meet the different needs of pupils. Fewer worksheets are in evidence and increased opportunities are being provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical and investigative work. Strategies such as 'Mathletics' and 'Megamaths' are increasing pupils' confidence and motivation in the subject. Similarly, the 'Big Write' is having a positive impact in improving pupil's spelling, punctuation and grammar. Increased opportunities are being provided to write at length but written work is sometimes marred by untidy presentation and low expectations by some teachers.

Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching. It is at least satisfactory, with a secure proportion that is good. Better teaching has clear learning objectives, good pace, high expectations and well-structured activities which engage pupils well. Where the teaching is less effective, work is not matched to the needs of the different ability groups. Consequently some complete tasks quickly but there is no extension activity to challenge them further. As a result, they become restless and bored. Sometimes, teachers' questioning does not challenge pupils' thinking enough. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long so the pace of the lesson slackens. Support by teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Work is sometimes marked against learning objectives but teachers do not often provide clear guidance to help pupils know what they need to do next to improve their learning. It is better in English than mathematics. The use of targets to improve pupil's learning is inconsistent.

Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010 are similar to those of the previous year in reading, writing and mathematics. They remain broadly average



in reading and writing but are below in mathematics. Attainment in reading and mathematics at the higher Level 3 is similar to that of 2009. However, standards in writing have improved and are now similar to those found nationally. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics is lower in 2010 than last year. Standards are well below average in both subjects. Fewer achieved at the expected Level 4 or the higher Level 5. Targets were not achieved and outcomes are below the government's floor targets. The most recent data shows that pupils are attaining well below age related expectations in all year groups. Analysis of the school's data and scrutiny of pupil's work shows that progress is at least satisfactory and good in a few classes. There is some variation between classes of the same year groups. In addition, there are differences between the rates of progress made by boys and girls in the same class and within the same year group. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities shows a similar pattern, with most making comparable rates of progress as other pupils.

The statement of action produced by the local authority following the last inspection met requirements. The action plan is appropriate and school leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress being made through good evaluations. Monitoring activities are clearly defined with a focus on outcomes for pupils. Appropriate and timely support has been provided by the local authority, in line with that identified in the post inspection action plan. In addition, the evaluation board has been effective in supporting and challenging school leaders to ensure it has remained on track to improve outcomes.

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

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector

