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Friday 25 June 2010

Mrs M Conlon (Intrim Headteacher)
Warren Dell Primary School
Gosforth Lane
South Oxhey
Watford
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Dear Mrs Conlon

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 Thursday 24 June 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please thank your Chair of the Governing Body and fellow governor, the staff and pupils who contributed to the inspection. I note that the substantive posts of headteacher and deputy headteacher have now been finalised and that arrangements are in place for you to work alongside this new leadership team in the forthcoming academic year.

As a result of the inspection on 14 December 2010, the school was asked to address the following.

- Raise levels of achievement, particularly in writing by ensuring that teaching includes:
 - planning based on assessment
 - challenging tasks pitched at the right level for all pupils
 - well-paced activities.
- Strengthen the role of the governing body by ensuring that governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school more closely.
- Improve the school's contribution to community cohesion.

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

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2, especially those in writing, are improving. This is because teachers have placed a greater emphasis on the development of pupils'

writing for a range of different purposes. Furthermore, carefully targeted support and extra teaching for individual pupils are filling the gaps in pupils' knowledge resulting from weaknesses in past teaching. Analysis of detailed assessment data related to pupils in Year 6 confirms their rate of progress has improved, with about three quarters of these pupils expected to attain nationally expected levels in the national tests. Despite this good achievement in writing at the end of Key Stage 2, progress across the school is still too variable because of the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning in some classes. Furthermore, some younger pupils still lack the necessary phonic skill and knowledge of familiar words to ensure accurate spelling in their writing. These factors are preventing good achievement.

Detailed lesson planning is now evident across the school because teachers make good use of plans stored on the school's own intranet following effective support from senior staff and external consultants. The quality of marking has improved and actively engages pupils in the process of self-assessment and target setting. Furthermore, data is gathered about the achievements of each individual pupil in reading, writing and mathematics. This data is analysed effectively to identify vulnerable groups of pupils and individuals in need of extra support in English and mathematics, and is reflected in the better progress of these pupils. Teachers are fully involved in the process of gathering assessment data and, consequently, they have a much better picture of each pupil's achievements in these areas of learning. Teachers are now using this assessment information satisfactorily to plan work closely matched to the individual needs of pupils. Furthermore, senior staff ensure teachers are held accountable for the progress pupils make through regular meetings with them. Good progress has been made in this area.

Lesson observations are frequently undertaken by the senior leaders with a firm focus on improving pupil outcomes. Inspection evidence confirms that the interim headteacher is rigorous in her approach to monitoring lessons. She provides detailed feedback to teachers on their strengths and where further improvements are needed. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve with some good teaching observed at the end of Key Stage 2. However, learning is still too variable in some other year groups where it ranges from good to inadequate. Key weaknesses seen include slow pace to teaching and some learning intentions that are too complicated, leaving pupils confused about what is being expected of them. These inconsistencies in teaching quality continue to limit the progress pupils make across the school.

Staff have taken positive steps to promote community cohesion across the school. Cross curricular events, such as 'World Week' and 'Who Do We Think We Are Week', have involved parents and enthused pupils, opening their eyes to the wider community and world around them. For example, following planned visits many can talk knowledgeably about different places of worship such as a Sikh temple and a mosque. A plan to promote community cohesion is now in place and school is better placed to make links with children in other countries.

The governing body now plays a greater role in monitoring the school's work. A review of individual roles and responsibilities has resulted in governors taking a specific responsibility for the oversight of improvement. They work closely with senior leaders and local authority staff, providing detailed reports to colleagues about progress being made and, consequently, demonstrate a greater understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the governing body is in a much stronger position to oversee the next stages in the school's development.

Interim school leadership has been effective in moving the school forward after a period of considerable instability for the school. In close partnership with the local authority school improvement officer, a solid foundation for further improvement has been laid down for the school's future development. Well thought through transition arrangements for the induction of the newly appointed leadership team provide satisfactory levels of capacity for further school improvement. The overall quality of support for the school from the local authority is good. The amended statement of action clearly addresses identified weaknesses and is fit for purpose.

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

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector