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Miss E Walker
Belgrave St Peter's CofE Primary School
Thurcaston Road
Leicester
LE4 5PG

Dear Miss Walker

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff, governors and pupils gave when I inspected your school on Thursday 23 September 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 25 January 2010, the school was asked to raise standards in Years 1 and 2, improve the quality of teaching, restructure the school staffing, develop the role of governors and raise attendance levels. These areas for improvement are set out in full in the annex to this letter.

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

There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection, including the restructuring of the school's senior leadership. The deputy headteacher took up post in September, along with a number of new appointments, including a Year 1 class teacher and specialist support staff for mathematics and literacy. Since January, one class teacher has taken an extended leave of absence and another has returned.

Following the last inspection, the school responded with suitable urgency to strengthen provision in Key Stage 1. End-of-year assessments indicate that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 made impressive progress over the course of the spring and summer terms, enabling the school to exceed its Key Stage 1 targets in reading, writing and mathematics. These improvements were achieved by the hard work of the class teachers and with well targeted support and interventions, based on rigorous tracking of pupil progress. In lessons, Key Stage 1 pupils make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress in their learning.



The quality of teaching has strengthened because the best teachers have responded to whole-school training and have quickly embedded best practice in planning and assessment. Although some teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory, there is an increasing proportion of good and outstanding lessons where lively and engaging teaching accelerates pupil progress. The school is addressing the most intractable weaknesses with suitable support and challenge.

Following the inspection, the need to restructure the school staffing was undertaken with remarkable speed and efficiently. Leaders and managers now have clearly defined responsibilities and accountability. Important changes have also been made to governance to ensure that proper protocols and procedures are in place, to strengthen the impact of the governing body and to develop governors' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In the absence of effective leadership from the Chair of the Governing Body, this essential work has been undertaken by the two vice chairs, who themselves have worked tirelessly to support the school and to ensure that the governors are able to hold the school to account.

The school has made good progress in improving attendance, although levels of absence remain above the national figure, and the persistent absence of a few children remains a significant challenge. The importance of good attendance has been highlighted and procedures for monitoring absence have been sensibly tightened.

The headteacher has steered the school's recovery with determination and a sharp focus on improving pupils' learning and progress. Robust and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision ensure that senior leaders are able to address residual weaknesses.

The local authority's statement of action has been suitably amended and is fit for purpose. The plan sets out suitable priorities and a good level of support for the school. Its impact has been satisfactory. The School Improvement Adviser has provided effective challenge and has responded swiftly and knowledgeably in order to meet the school's needs. In particular, the school has welcomed the support from the associate headteacher and the partner school, and values the guidance provided by specialist consultants and local authority support services.

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 Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010

- Raise standards in Years 1 and 2, and improve pupils' learning and rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics through:
 - the establishment of a permanent team of Key Stage 1 teachers
 - enabling pupils to work more independently
 - ensuring improved support for pupils, which is evaluated routinely to measure its success and effectiveness.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching across the school, and improve the quality of pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring consistently high quality marking across all subjects in line with the school's new marking policy
 - developing the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress
 - planning lessons to take more account of pupils' prior attainment
 - providing lessons that interest and challenge all pupils, including those who are more able, gifted and/or talented
 - questioning and challenging pupils to think more clearly about their learning and to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Ensure that by April 2010 the headteacher, governors and local authority implement their plans to restructure the school's staffing in order that appointments are made, and the new structure is in place for the summer term.
- Ensure the governing body improves its involvement and impact by:
 - becoming more involved in school self-evaluation and improvement planning
 - auditing governors' skills and undertaking training to address areas of weakness.
- Work with pupils, parents, carers and the education welfare officer to reduce unauthorised absence and improve attendance.