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Mr Darren Clews
Little Heath Primary School
Spring Road
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Dear Mr Clews

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 Wednesday 22 September 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the Chair of your Governing Body and the representative from the local authority, both of whom gave their time to meet with me.

Since the last inspection, the school has appointed four new teachers. Currently, the deputy headteacher is absent from work and her responsibilities are being shared by the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The school employs an advanced skills teacher and she has been temporarily released from her local authority commitments elsewhere to focus her time on developing teaching and learning at this school.

As a result of the inspection on 14 January 2010, the school was asked to:

- accelerate rates of progress and raise attainment
- raise expectations of pupils and staff
- improve the effectiveness of teaching
- develop leadership so that all contribute to school improvement.

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.

Rates of progress are improving in most year groups with significant numbers of pupils making accelerated progress that is helping them make up for previous underachievement. As a result, standards of attainment are beginning to rise. Test results for 2010 show that last year's leavers left the school with standards of attainment that were nearer to average than those found in previous years.



Teaching is improving although, in some classes, this still has a way to go. This is because some teachers are yet to fully understand the needs, interests and abilities of the full range of learners. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are making rapid progress and are developing a real confidence in their own abilities. However, in too many classes, marking is not yet sufficiently developed to help pupils improve their work. The school has increased and refocused the additional help available for pupils, both within class and in sessions outside the classroom. This action has improved the progress being made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils who have fallen behind. The most significant improvement seen is through the individual and group support some pupils are receiving to help them catch up with their peers. One teacher delighted in the fact that she could see the difference in pupils' ability as a direct result of such intervention.

Leaders at all levels have a much better understanding than before of the levels of progress being made across the school. Each term, teachers assess pupils' progress and meet with senior leaders to discuss this. This information is being used for three significant purposes. First, it allows teachers and leaders to plan well focused and timely support for individuals and groups of pupils. Second, it gives leaders a clear understanding of the progress being made across the school. Third, it allows for patterns in underperformance to be identified and challenged, with teachers being given additional support and guidance where necessary.

The capacity in the school continues to grow. Systems for monitoring and improving school provision are developing well and beginning to have a noticeable impact. Teachers report that there is a real sense of direction and expectation now, and this is driving them to improve further. Together, leaders, teachers and support staff share a collective sense of responsibility for moving the school forward. There is no noticeable denial of the need to improve further and a clear sense of ambition exists within the school.

The local authority has provided significant support to the school through additional resource and expertise. They have produced a suitable statement of action that complements the school's own improvement plan. Many of the resources that provide the additional pupil support and intervention are funded by the local authority and this is having a positive impact on eradicating underachievement. It is important that the school and local authority carefully manage the removal of this support at the appropriate time so the school is able to maintain the emerging improvements seen.

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

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector

