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15 September 2010

Mrs Jane Bowley
Coppice Primary School
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Dear Mrs Bowley

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 14 September 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and Chair of Governors for their time and courtesy. I would like to particularly thank pupils for the enjoyable time I spent talking with them.

Since the school's last inspection, the headteacher has been absent and the deputy headteacher has undertaken the role of acting headteacher.

As a result of the inspection on 26-27 January 2010, the school was asked to:

- immediately put procedures and checks in place to ensure that the school fully meets all safeguarding requirements
- reduce fixed-term exclusions by drawing up and implementing a more flexible approach to dealing with incidents of misbehaviour
- improve the progress made by the most able pupils in writing by:
 - ensuring they are always given suitably challenging tasks
 - providing such pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 with more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

My visits to a sample of lessons confirm that the school's analysis of information on pupils' performance is accurate. At end of Key Stage 2 in 2010, attainment was above average in English and average in mathematics. However, as in previous



years, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level 5 in both mathematics and English was below average.

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to embed many initiatives to raise standards in writing, particularly by the most able pupils. Finer detail in planning, more emphasis on the use of modelled writing, writing for a purpose and consistent use of 'Big Writing' sessions have all contributed to improvements made.

Additionally, pupils talk enthusiastically about their 'Read Write Inc' sessions and are eager to participate in these. Pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills and these are used effectively to support writing. Teacher's planning shows that the school is increasing its attention to reinforcing pupils' writing skills through many of the curricular topics. For example, in a Year 5 topic lesson, pupils wrote imaginative, detailed and descriptive letters to a doctor describing the effects of scurvy. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that standards in writing are improving, with many pupils making good progress. However, the rate at which pupils make progress in their writing varies and, in some classes, remains too slow.

Swift and successful action has been taken by the school to reduce fixed term exclusions since the last inspection. In the period from January to July 2010, no fixed term or permanent exclusions were recorded. The school has devised a new behaviour policy and all staff, including support staff and midday supervisors, demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring that this is rigorously and consistently implemented. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good in all lessons, as well as at play times and lunch times.

A scrupulous review of safeguarding procedures was immediately undertaken following the last inspection. Safeguarding has been prioritised and is now established in policies, working practices and the ethos of the school. Rigorous systems have been put in place with regard to recruitment and vetting checks. Scrutiny of all documentation confirms that the school now meets all current requirements. As a result, the effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as its overall effectiveness, has improved. Governors have developed a clear understanding of their role in checking safeguarding arrangements and consequently, governance has also improved.

The local authority has provided good support. Reports show that the school benefits from appropriate challenge and support received from regular visits made by local authority staff, including the school improvement partner.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector