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25 June 2010

Mrs Sarah Young  
Executive Headteacher  
Hessle Penshurst Primary School  
Winthorpe Road  
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Dear Mrs Young

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected Hessle Penshurst Primary School on 24 June 2010, for the time you and the Head of School gave to our phone calls and for the helpful information provided before and during my visit.

Hessle Penshurst Primary School is a federated school consisting of Hessle High School and Hessle Penshurst Primary, with one governing body and one management structure. A Section 5 inspection of Hessle High School was carried out simultaneously with this Grade 3 monitoring visit of the primary school. There were joint meetings of inspectors from both inspections with the school's leadership and management, the governing body and staff concerned with safeguarding.

A new Head of School was appointed to the primary school in June 2009 and a new Executive Headteacher of the federation in September 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 17-18 November 2008, the primary school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2
- make sure that activities planned for more able pupils were sufficiently different and challenging
- develop the skills of the middle managers in monitoring and improving teaching and learning.

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.

The impact of the federation on building up the school's capacity to improve has been strong. For example: through developing better management and leadership skills; by working collaboratively and effectively on strategic planning; and through sharing and providing resources, such as additional equipment and technical support for information and communication technology (ICT). In this way, the federation is also demonstrating good value for money. Centralising administrative and personnel matters at the high school has freed up time for the Head of School to focus on improving teaching and learning.

Formal links between the two schools are easing the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. Pupils have an increasingly strong sense of community, commenting that they feel very much part of one school.

Governors provide good direction. Policy-making and procedures are determined as one school, so school leaders have established a common assessment system. This is being implemented well in the primary school. Teachers track pupils' progress closely and routinely use this information when preparing lessons to ensure that they meet pupils' needs.

This tailoring of tasks and activities to individuals is a major factor in pupils' rapidly improving achievement, including that of more able pupils. Learning and progress in the lessons observed were good and frequently outstanding, representing good improvement since the last inspection. High levels of challenge ensured an exciting, purposeful environment for learning. In discussion, pupils said that lessons had become much more enjoyable, for example in mathematics, where 'hands on activities' were helping them to learn faster. Literacy work in lessons observed showed that teachers are developing pupils' speaking and listening skills well and are effectively encouraging writing at length for real purpose.

The school's data for 2010 confirm that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is rising in both mathematics and in English. In some aspects, such as reading, attainment is rising rapidly. The school takes care to check the reliability of teachers' assessments, including with the local authority.

This improving picture results from the rapidly improving quality of teaching and from pupils' exposure to a curriculum based on themes that is proving to be relevant and meaningful. These two factors are contributing significantly to pupils' much increased enjoyment of school.

The Head of School has provided a better structured approach to the teaching of mathematics, with good guidance for teachers that has built up their confidence to deliver effective lessons that move learning on. The school's leaders appreciate the

good support given by the local authority in recognising and sharing this good practice with other schools. The science specialism of the high school is being used to good effect through the sharing of teaching expertise.

The Head of School's dynamic approach is promoting a vibrant atmosphere. Pupils have a real voice in decisions that affect them. Following a drive to encourage reading, pupils asked for more books, then a better library, and they got it! However, they had to design it, too. This proved to be an exciting, successful challenge for gifted and talented pupils in Year 6. Creative literacy work, leading to a Year 5 mural in the library garden, and science lessons at the high school are further examples of stimulating activities that have been organised for high-attaining pupils since the last inspection.

Middle leaders have been enabled to take on a much more prominent role within their subject areas, and have implemented several effective initiatives. However, there a number of imminent staffing changes that affect key staff who have responsibility for taking improvements forward. The school recognises that the drive for improvement must not stall.

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

Honoree Gordon  
Her Majesty's Inspector