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Mrs Karen Clarke
Headteacher
Cage Green Primary School
Cage Green Road
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Dear Mrs Clarke

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Cage Green Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the chair of the governing body, the leaders who attended meetings, your staff and the pupils.

There have been a few changes to the school's context since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher left in December 2010 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2011; she is currently on maternity leave. The Early Years Foundation Stage underwent a substantial refit last summer and children now access a dedicated outdoor learning environment. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased this is in part due to the 30-place provision for pupils with autism.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 December 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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 previous inspection indicated that standards were starting to improve, and this is the case. Attainment rose significantly in 2010 compared to the outcomes in 2009. Pupils' attainments are now closer to national averages in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and are above average in Key Stage 1. This represents good progress. The school was able to provide convincing evidence that pupils are on



track to meet their challenging targets. This reflects improvements in teaching, use of assessment and the curriculum. More-able pupils particularly achieve well and increasing numbers are reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics. The proportion of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage working at age-appropriate levels is broadly in line with the national average. However, boys' attainment in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy is significantly lower than that of the girls. Pupils join Year 1 with the skills and knowledge needed for the next stage of their education. As they move through the school their progress accelerates, particularly in reading and numeracy. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making better progress than before and the gaps in their learning are reducing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those within the autism unit make at least satisfactory and often good progress as a result of well-targeted 1:1 support and additional interventions within small groups.

Pupils are keen to do well and are enthusiastic learners, especially when tasks are interesting and engaging. As one pupil said, 'Learning is more fun now.' Behaviour is good and because the school is so inclusive, pupils are well integrated, including those from the autism unit.

The headteacher has taken the lead role for improving assessment, and progress in this area is good. Assessment information is used rigorously to set realistic yet challenging targets. Almost all teaching observed during the visit was good, and in line with the school's own monitoring and evaluation. Teachers have improved their understanding of National Curriculum levels. Consequently, their expectations of what pupils can achieve have improved and lessons are challenging for all abilities, including the most able. Marking of pupils' work is generally good but a few inconsistencies remain. Pupils show an understanding of their individual targets and are clear about what they need to do to improve. Pupils' work is moderated six times yearly in writing and mathematics. This and regular pupil progress meetings ensure teachers are accountable for pupils' progress. Assessment information is used effectively to trigger any necessary interventions. This is a particular help to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive additional support for their needs and so are helped to make the progress they should.

The school has responded with energy to improve the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is a vibrant, well-resourced, accessible learning environment. During the visit, children were observed thoroughly enjoying their learning, while performing on the staged area in the barn, pond dipping and counting fish, planting vegetables and digging for worms in the garden area, and using the climbing equipment. Provision effectively promotes activities across all the required areas of learning. For example, children used big paintbrushes to write their names on the ground, told stories about the dinosaurs they had dug up and happily wrote 'cat, rat and mat' whilst practising blending sounds and letters. Such activities effectively develop children's early literacy skills, an area identified by the school as requiring further development.



The headteacher has a sharply focused understanding of the urgency of the pace of change for pupils in the autism unit. The school has done all within its powers to improve the quality of provision in the unit and has successfully harnessed support from parents, carers, the press and local Member of Parliament. The headteacher is the driving force behind the ongoing negotiations with the local authority. The local authority has now confirmed that plans for a new build will be completed by October 2011. Meanwhile, increased access to equipment and to occupational, speech and language therapists and further inclusion of pupils where possible into mainstream classes have improved resources and provision. Consequently, pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress from their starting points. However, their further progress is still hampered by the inadequate building and limited resources that are not conducive to their particular needs.

School improvement planning is strongly focused on the areas for development and has underpinned the progress made. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is much improved and there are clear emerging strengths in the use of assessment and monitoring practices and in the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in school self-evaluation. New protocols and regular monitoring visits ensure members of the governing body have a clearer understanding of the school's work, and they challenge and support the school effectively.

The local authority has effectively supported improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. It has been slower to react to the urgent need of improved provision in the autism unit. The support of the school improvement officer is highly valued by the school. The challenge for the school is to sustain pupils' accelerated progress and maintain good teaching quality. The school's capacity to improve is underpinned by a shared culture within the school for driving forward improvements, which to date shows good improvement from the last inspection.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning
Additional Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- Raise all teaching to the level of the best in order to raise standards by:
 - ensuring all staff have high expectations of what children can achieve
 - marking work consistently and regularly in order to help pupils improve
 - using assessment information more rigorously to set realistic yet challenging targets for improvement.

- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a well-resourced outdoor learning.

- As a matter of urgency, review the facilities and resources in the autistic centre in order to improve the quality of provision and ensure progress for these pupils is maximised.