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Mrs M Reardon
South Grove Primary School
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Dear Mrs Reardon

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 14 October 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please will you pass my thanks to your senior staff and your chair of governors, as well as the pupils who gave their time to talk to me and shared their delicious handmade bread.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels
- raise teachers' expectations of the more able pupils and ensure they receive appropriate challenge in lessons
- improve the role of phase leaders in raising standards and improving pupils' progress.

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

Attainment when children enter the school is dropping and remains well below expectations for the age. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasing. In 2009 most Year 6 leavers had special educational needs and a large minority, some with little English, had joined the school in Years 5 and 6. Although these were welcomed into the school, this had a downward effect on overall attainment levels. Attainment for pupils of all abilities had risen in 2008 and is set to improve again this year, but it remains below average by the time pupils leave the school. Attainment is also beginning to rise at the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of pupils' learning has improved and overall achievement is satisfactory.



The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is gradually increasing. The more able pupils are strongly involved in meeting challenging individual targets and moving to the next level. This results in plenty of enthusiasm and enjoyment in lessons and more rapid progress for these pupils this term. All of the lessons seen during the visit were good or outstanding with high-quality assessment and target setting evident for all pupils.

Senior leaders have ensured that teachers' planning is much more closely linked to pupils' current level of attainment and that work set for individual pupils more accurately meets their needs. Teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are therefore increasing and this has improved the progress these pupils make in most classes. In most lessons, the more able pupils feel they have plenty of challenge and move on quickly. In a few classes one or two pupils are working at levels far in excess of their age group. In a small minority of lessons in Key Stage 2 expectations and the progress of more able pupils have been too low. In particular more able pupils have not been making enough progress in writing. Some initiatives are now in place to begin to address this.

The role of phase leaders has been transformed since September 2009 and they now work effectively to raise standards and improve progress for all groups in the school. Their time is spent working beside teachers and teaching assistants in monitoring, planning, team teaching and coaching to increase teaching skills. Phase leaders try to ensure that all groups are moving forward as fast as possible. This is beginning to improve practice, and learning in most lessons is now good or better. The impact of this work on raising attainment is still emerging.

The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses in driving improvement. Through clear messages and close working with parents, the school has increased attendance, which supports the drive to raise attainment further. School improvement partners provide satisfactory support to help the school implement various strategies for securing continued improvement. Governors work effectively with senior staff to address previous issues and raise standards. Challenging targets, based upon pupils' predicted progress, have been exceeded in 2008 and 2009. The school's aspirations are clearly moving outcomes in the right direction, demonstrating progress towards a better capacity to improve.

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

Patricia Potheary
Additional Inspector

