

22 February 2010

Ms Debbie Sleep
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Sleep

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 February 2010, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please thank the chair of governors, staff and the pupils who also gave up their time.

Since the last inspection Staffing has changed. You have been appointed substantive headteacher after the acting headship and you also have a new deputy headteacher. You are managing a number of job-share arrangements on the staff and one of these is a newly qualified teacher.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 March 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, and increase the opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics and science.
- Strengthen the use of data to assess and monitor pupils' progress rigorously to ensure they all make at least consistently good progress.
- Work closely with some parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Improve the quality of outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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



Results for Year 6 in 2009 improved on those in 2008 and, although they remained below the national level in English and mathematics, they were very close to the national standard for science. These figures mask some impressive progress for individual pupils, including many of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Overall more pupils are learning at an improved pace and the rigorous school tracking system shows clearly that almost all pupils have begun to catch up towards expected levels. Pupils' motivation is good and they are constantly striving to meet the higher aspirations you and your staff have for them. This is clearly seen in the improved reading programme, where the carefully arranged groups meet pupils' needs well. Pupils have begun to use their increased knowledge of letters and sounds to develop and improve their writing skills. Exciting examples were seen in Years 5 and 6. Younger classes have a much better foundation for their future writing development due to the wide range of effective strategies you have adopted to support them. Staff benefited from the additional training provided, including that given to teaching assistants who play an important role leading groups and supporting more hesitant learners. Teaching and learning are consistently at least satisfactory and a large proportion is now good. Pupils' achievement is also improving on the broader outcomes as evidenced by the recent 'Healthy School Plus Award' and the work they are doing towards the gold level of the Arts Mark.

Leaders have successfully tightened up on a number of issues. The monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and rigorous and has led to improvements. Time within the school day is used more effectively and pupil attendance has improved; although it is still below the national average. The school is rightly taking a firm line to deal with the minority of families who still have difficulties getting their children to school regularly. The school has secure safeguarding procedures. Middle managers have helped ensure that lessons include more opportunity for pupils to have 'hands-on experiences'. This results in some good science investigations such as those seen on electrical circuits and on forces during the monitoring visit. Pupils try and solve problems independently but they still lack confidence to assess and check their work, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils are being given appropriate support to improve their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the indoor space has been adapted to try and compensate for the lack of access to constant outdoor provision. The governors have supported the school to get exciting plans for the external area drawn up. These are expected to go for planning approval shortly and the access phase of this work is scheduled for completion in September 2010. In the meantime, the children still have somewhat limited opportunities for outdoor learning as current staffing levels are insufficient to supervise access for children throughout the day. This is unfortunate as there are some children who would especially benefit from more robust active outdoor learning.

The school has benefited from strong support from the local authority through the intensifying support programme and various other initiatives. You have had appropriate induction support as a new headteacher. The improvements in tracking



pupil progress and in involving all staff successfully in the process, together with the raised standards in science and the improved attendance indicate the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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

Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector