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8 June 2011

Mrs E Taylor
Headteacher
Little Bloxwich CofE VC Primary School
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Little Bloxwich CofE VC Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 June 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 pupils and the governor who spent time talking with me.

Since the last inspection, one member of staff has retired and one new teacher has been appointed. In addition, leadership responsibilities have been clarified and shared with all members of staff.

As a result of the inspection on 4 and 5 February 2010, 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Following the last inspection, the school set about addressing the significantly below average attainment by the end of Year 6. The reasons for this underachievement were largely due to inconsistencies in classroom practice, gaps in learning and insufficient opportunities for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to learn independently so they could make rapid progress. As a consequence, the school took effective and rigorous action to rebuild the school's capacity to drive and sustain improvement. Good and determined leadership enabled effective changes to be made to the way the learning is organised. Actions to overcome weakness in



teaching and outcomes have been concerted and effective. Senior managers now hold teachers fully accountable for the progress made by the pupils in their classes. The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are used increasingly well by all staff to identify and address any gaps in learning.

Actions taken to develop a broader, exciting curriculum have been rigorous and effective. New schemes of work have been introduced across all phases and modified for different year groups. Links between the different areas of learning have been identified as well as opportunities for developing creativity and a greater awareness of the multicultural nature of society. This is laying a firm foundation for sustained improvement in pupils' knowledge, motivation and enjoyment of learning. Furthermore, a strategy for focusing on phonics and vocabulary has resulted in accelerated progress in reading and writing across all groups. Well-deployed teaching assistants have made a significant contribution to the success of this initiative.

These changes are embedded well and the impact can be seen in the accelerating rates of progress for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, attainment in the current Year 6 has risen strongly compared with the previous two years and is on track to be broadly average overall by the end of the year. School data show the number of pupils on track to reach the higher levels has also improved, although it is not yet quite as rapid in mathematics as it is in English. This represents good progress overall since the beginning of the year and confirms that the school has built good capacity for sustaining and driving improvements.

Further evidence to support the school's good capacity can be seen in the progress made by other groups. Children in Early Years Foundation Stage are, for example, making good progress from their lower than expected starting points. The staff are justly proud of their recent achievement but are not complacent. They are fully aware that more remains to be done and are determined to raise attainment further.

Joint lesson observations confirm that the proportion of good or better teaching is rising rapidly, although some inconsistencies remain. As a consequence, pupils are making accelerated progress to make up lost ground. Tasks are now much more closely matched to the needs of different groups and individuals. Teachers are increasingly effective at providing more opportunities for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to explore their own ideas and work independently in order to increase their rates of progress. Some of the older pupils explained that they learn more effectively when are able to explore and investigate their own ideas. One said, 'You learn from your mistakes and it's fun finding solutions to problems...and you don't forget.'

Local authority advisers and external consultants have provided good support for school development. They have, for example, successfully developed the skills of subject leaders at monitoring the quality of learning within their areas of



responsibility. There is now a shared vision for improvement and an ambition to succeed. Attainment and achievement are rising rapidly because the school is setting challenging targets and achieving them, although more remains to be done. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

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

John Earish

Additional Inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2010

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise standards in English, mathematics and science so they match the national average by 2010 and exceed it by 2012 through:
 - ensuring that the majority of teaching is good by July 2010
 - providing an appropriate match of task for the range of ability in each class
 - making sure that teaching assistants are well used in every session
 - developing pupils' independent learning skills and helping them to apply these routinely in lessons.
- Develop a broader, exciting curriculum by September 2010 by:
 - providing more active, investigative learning and opportunities for pupils' creative development
 - augmenting the curriculum to include wider multicultural aspects
 - creating cross-curricular links and providing opportunities to develop artistic talent.