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Mrs S Owens
Bakewell Methodist Junior School
Stoney Close
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Dear Mrs Owens

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bakewell Methodist Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the members of staff and the pupils who spoke with me.

Since the last inspection there have been significant staffing changes. The substantive headteacher returned from maternity leave immediately following the inspection. A long standing member of the teaching staff has retired and a new senior teacher was appointed in September 2010, with responsibility for leading and managing information and communication technology (ICT). Other middle leadership roles have been reorganised and reallocated.

As a result of the inspection on 24 March 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection, there are signs of significant improvement in pupils' achievement. The end of Key Stage 2 tests results in 2010 showed attainment to be exceptionally high in English and above average in mathematics. Evidence in school confirms that the current Year 6 is on track for above average attainment in English and mathematics by the time that they leave the school. Furthermore, though there is some variation in other year groups and between subjects, standards are currently exceptionally high in Year 5 and likely to be at least above average in Years 3 and 4. Considerably more pupils are on track to achieve the higher grades of which they are capable. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are generally



above those expected. Because of embedded improvements in teaching, the balance has shifted from the majority of pupils making satisfactory progress to the very large majority in each year group now making good progress. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and where there is potential for progress to slow, successful interventions are swiftly put in place so that this can be addressed. School leaders recognise that the standard of pupils' presentation has yet to catch up with their ability and expectations. Attainment in ICT has begun to rise across school and is particularly strong in Year 5.

Pupils demonstrate their increasing enjoyment of school through their improved attendance, which is now above average. There are no issues with persistent absence. Because of consistently effective behaviour management and very positive relationships, pupils' behaviour is mostly good and often exemplary in lessons where it makes a strong contribution to good learning. Pupils were seen to collaborate and cooperate enthusiastically to discuss and solve mathematical and other problems. All were keen to be involved and to do well.

A key to success has been the significant strengthening of leadership's capacity to drive forward school improvement. The headteacher has astutely reorganised leadership responsibilities, and improved communication and the extent to which she holds staff to account for pupils' performance. Importantly, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment have significantly improved since the last inspection, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils. There is a rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation activities, the findings of which are swiftly acted upon. Lesson observations are routinely conducted by the headteacher who makes accurate judgements about their quality and focuses resources astutely to facilitate further improvements where necessary. All curriculum leaders now play a part in a cycle of monitoring and evaluation activities to establish how effectively their subjects are being taught. For example, learning walks, interviews with pupils and scrutiny of planning and pupils' work are carried out as a matter of routine. Several of these leaders could evidence convincingly how monitoring and feedback activities have improved teaching. For example, the use of differentiated questioning to challenge pupils of all abilities and the more effective use of plenary sessions effectively to evaluate what pupils have learnt during a lesson. Not all of these leaders have had the opportunity to develop their skills in lesson observation. Systems for assessing and tracking individual pupils' performance are thorough and continue to be refined.

The leadership and management of ICT is now a strength. The new leader promptly set about improving resources, staff confidence and competence in its use to support teaching and learning across all subjects. Though the new curriculum is still being developed, pupils are already excited to talk about their memorable experiences of how the use of ICT has supported their learning; for example, in researching information to design and create posters for a history project on the Tudors in Year 4. In Year 5, a 'Lights, Camera, Action' project combined literacy, mathematics and ICT and resulted in pupils' films receiving five nominations for the Derbyshire equivalent of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards.

All teaching observed during the inspection was good and some had outstanding features. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Planning is detailed and is informed by accurate assessments so that it includes activities to challenge pupils of different abilities appropriately, important questions to be asked and vocabulary to be learned. Subject knowledge is secure. Additional adults make a strong contribution to the good progress of pupils either through one to one support or group work. The best lessons seen featured open questions and activities which not only encouraged pupils to solve problems and explain their ideas but ensured teachers knew exactly how well pupils were progressing and when was the right time to move them on. Learning in these lessons moved on at a fast pace. Very occasionally, teachers did not pick up on pupils' misconceptions or notice that work was too easy quickly enough so that learning slowed. Some good examples of marking were seen which provided pupils with an assessment of their success and the all important next steps for further success. There is not a consistent approach to the provision of written feedback across school.

School leaders say they have valued the support they have received from the local authority in support for the development of ICT and safeguarding training. The headteacher has particularly valued the support of fellow partners in the local cluster of schools in sharing best practice.

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

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by:
 - ensuring all teachers make good use of assessment data to plan work with an appropriate level of challenge for pupils of different abilities within each class
 - reviewing and improving the curriculum for information and communication technology
 - empowering subject and curriculum leaders to carry out their monitoring and evaluation roles effectively.