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27 September 2011

Mrs S Hughes
Headteacher
Montreal CE Primary School
Ennerdale Road
Cleator Moor
Cumbria
CA25 5LW

Dear Mrs Hughes,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Montreal CE Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Monday 26 September 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 to the local authority general adviser who came into school to talk to me.

Since the last full inspection there has been a significant reduction in staffing consequent to measures taken by the school to tackle a large budget deficit. In managing the budget the headteacher has received effective advice and support from the governing body and the local authority. Pupils are now taught in larger, mixed-age classes. The school has recently gained full accreditation as an Adventure Learning School.

As a result of the inspection on Wednesday 23 June 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.

The purposeful leadership of the headteacher is driving the school rapidly and securely forward. Members of the governing body and the local authority are providing highly effective support and challenge to accelerate improvement. The 2011 end of Key Stage 2 test results in English and mathematics improved significantly despite the unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the cohort. School predictions, confirmed by evidence gathered during the monitoring inspection, suggest that attainment is set to rise significantly again in 2012. The proportion of pupils making at least expected progress from their generally well-below average starting points is rising rapidly, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.



At the core of the rapid and secure improvement lie several important factors. These are:

- increasingly accurate self-evaluation enabling the school to identify where it should be doing better
- effective planning to provide a sharp focus on tackling these areas
- increasingly robust monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning leading to effective actions to bring about improvement
- increasingly effective use of assessment data to set demanding targets and track pupils' progress towards them
- and innovations in the curriculum to engage pupils more actively in learning and add to their enjoyment.

Pupils say that they are now enjoying school much more because they do more exciting and 'fun things'. They say that they are expected to learn more for themselves and spend less time listening to the teacher in lessons. This was certainly borne out in the observations of teaching and learning during the monitoring inspection. Teaching is planned to have a sharp focus on learning. Tasks are becoming much more closely matched to pupils' different ages, needs and abilities. In one mixed-age literacy class, for example, a range of different activities on the same theme of analysing a single text engaged and challenged all pupils appropriately. Pupils are becoming willing and industrious learners who enjoy contributing their ideas in group and pair work. They behave well, listen attentively and are growing in confidence as speakers.

A growing range of innovative activities in the curriculum is providing pupils with a wide range of memorable experiences that are supporting their personal development and their literacy and numeracy skills. Activities such as residential Adventure Learning expeditions, a Dragon Quest, the John Muir Award and the 'Girt Dog' not only provide pupils with opportunities to explore the beautiful environment close to the school but provide a wealth of active learning opportunities to write excitingly about their adventures. Pupils take great pride in describing how they learned to calculate the circumference and height of trees using mathematical formulae!

Rapid progress has been made in using assessment data more effectively to track pupils' progress and raise expectations. Pupils are becoming much more aware of what is expected of them. Marking is improving in its consistency and effectiveness in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work and achieve their targets.

The strong yet sensitive leadership of the headteacher is laying solid foundations for sustained improvement. Other leaders and managers are providing increasingly effective support, especially the literacy and numeracy coordinators who are pivotal in promoting and sharing good practice and setting higher expectations. Teaching assistants and the learning mentor provide increasingly strong support for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Staff morale is improving rapidly, as is the focus on making sure pupils make the progress they should so that they are prepared well for future success.

During the monitoring inspection procedures for safeguarding pupils were found to be carried out meticulously.

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

Mr Stephen Wall
Additional Inspector

Annex

**The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place
Wednesday 23 June 2010**

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - matching learning more effectively to pupils' individual needs
 - challenging pupils with learning that stretches them to reach their best
 - providing opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and develop their speaking and listening skills
 - helping pupils to use and apply their key literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

- Improve the use of assessment to plan learning by:
 - regularly checking pupils' work to evaluate the levels they are reaching and using this information to set specific objectives for what they need to do next
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work is of consistent quality in helping them to know how they can improve.

- Improve the quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 so more of it is good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - providing more practical learning where pupils are actively engaged.