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Mrs S Hawes
Headteacher
Hopton Wafers CofE (Controlled) Primary School
Cleobury Mortimer
Kidderminster
DY14 0NA

Dear Mrs Hawes

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hopton Wafers CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass my thanks on to the pupils and governors for the time they gave to talk with me during the inspection.

Since the inspection in June 2010, the school has been formally notified that it will close at the end of August 2012. During the period since the previous inspection the number of pupils on roll has fallen from 28 to 13. There are currently six pupils in Year 6, three pupils in Year 2 and only one pupil in each of the remaining year groups.

As a result of the inspection on 29 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:

satisfactory progress in making improvements

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



The school has prepared a suitable action plan to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. This plan includes appropriate monitoring and evaluation activities with clear links to pupils' outcomes. This contributes to the improved ability of the governing body to hold the school to account for its work. It is an example of how the school has demonstrated that it has made satisfactory progress towards having a better capacity to improve.

Procedures to set targets to help the pupils improve their work have been established. These targets are set through discussions with individual pupils and are reviewed regularly. The targets are clearly written in child-friendly language and are closely matched to the pupils' abilities. Clear records are kept by the class teachers and these are used to share the targets with parents and carers. Pupils understand their targets and most pupils, especially the most able, could talk about them without having to refer to the targets written in their books. Where the targets were most effective, pupils explained in depth what their targets meant. In Key Stage 2, there were some good examples of the teacher referring to pupils' targets when marking work in their English books. This comprehensive system of setting and monitoring targets is at a relatively early stage of development. It is currently most effective in English. In mathematics, targets and marking are more simplistic, especially in Key Stage 2. In a few cases in Key Stage 1, opportunities were missed to set targets for important development points such as correct letter formation for less-able pupils.

Lessons are planned to meet the needs of the pupils most of the time, although the match of activities to pupils' needs is better in Key Stage 2 than for the younger pupils. Consequently, pupils in Key Stage 2 make more rapid progress than the younger pupils. The majority of pupils are in Key Stage 2 and benefit from carefully targeted work and good support from the adults in the classroom. The support of teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a particular strength. The small number of pupils in Key Stage 1 and Reception represent a wide range of abilities including a high proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite the school's efforts, activities are not consistently well-matched to the full range of learning needs in the class. For example, during the visit, the youngest pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to explore early writing skills, whereas older pupils were not challenged sufficiently to produce longer pieces of writing. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1.

National assessment data indicate that attainment has improved since the previous inspection, although it remains average at the end of Key Stage 2. Measures of progress, based on the school's own data as well as national data, show that pupils make satisfactory progress, although progress is more rapid in English than it is in mathematics. This mirrors the quality and effectiveness of the target setting in the two subjects.

The school has implemented a comprehensive range of assessments, based on teachers' judgements and national tests, to monitor the attainment and progress of each pupil. Again, this is more robust in English than in mathematics. The data are used to track progress over a year and the school has plans in place to improve the system further to track progress over shorter periods of time. The school uses the system effectively to inform planning and to target support such as one-to-one tuition.

The skills of the governing body have been enhanced through training in the use of published data to evaluate the school's work. The governing body is now reviewing the work of the school more effectively through scrutiny of reports from the school and the local authority. However, it is aware that it needs to develop its skills further in asking questions to challenge the school more effectively.

The school has worked in partnership with a small cluster of schools on a project, led by an advanced skills teacher, to develop teaching and learning in mathematics. The governing body has also benefitted from training provided by the local authority. This support has been beneficial in helping the school 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

Mark Mumby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the way assessment is used to secure good progress for all pupils, especially the more able by:
 - providing each pupil with easy to see steps in learning in English and mathematics which are shared with staff and parents
 - making sure these steps are suited to each pupil's different levels of attainment and are changed as soon as they are achieved
 - using these steps to plan lessons in more detail, to ensure that tasks relate to the full range of pupils' levels of attainment.

- Develop leadership skills in using data more effectively to secure improvement by:
 - better identifying trends in progress for different pupil groups over time and so highlighting, more precisely, areas for development
 - ensuring that governors hold the school to account for outcomes.