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25th May 2006

Mr A Kirby
The Headteacher
Mesty Croft Primary School
St Luke's Road
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Dear Mr Kirby

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I visited your school on 24 May, for the time which you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Having considered carefully all the evidence presented by the school and the local authority together with evidence from Ofsted data, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress on the issues identified at the last inspection.

As a result of its inspection in October 2005 the school was asked to focus especially on improving the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, in order to ensure that pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. It was also asked to closely monitor the work of the school to maintain the momentum for improvement.

The school's actions have been well focused and appropriate and well led by the headteacher. Monitoring and evaluation are much improved. A rigorous programme of lesson observations has ensured that the leadership team and particularly the headteacher have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Lesson observations have been supported by scrutinies of the pupils' work, and weekly analyses of the quality of planning. Clear feedback to teachers about the quality of their work has helped them to make improvements where necessary. The leadership team has made some good decisions about how to further increase the rigour of their monitoring and evaluation to ensure that it continues to have the required impact.

Positive developments in assessment practices have led to the school having a much better understanding of the levels which pupils are working at and, therefore, of what they need to learn next. The Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) tracking system is being well used to identify whether pupils are meeting their targets and to make appropriate changes, if necessary.



The school's and local authority's (LA) monitoring indicates that assessment for learning practices are beginning to be used well to support pupils' learning. This was also observed during the monitoring visit.

The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 has improved significantly. Staff have worked hard to incorporate a number of positive changes into their planning, teaching and classroom environments. As a result, pupils are consistently making progress which is at least satisfactory. In the lessons observed during this visit, teaching was well structured to meet the pupils' needs. Teachers and learning support staff understood the next steps that the pupils needed to take and were quick to support pupils with anything that they found difficult. Teachers encouraged pupils to support each other and celebrated the pupils' successes. Pupils were proud of their achievements and enjoyed their learning. The school's initial assessments, based on the Year 2 national tests, suggest that pupils have reached standards which are around the national average and that results are likely to be better than last year's. The school's data indicate that pupils have made at least satisfactory progress since the end of the Foundation Stage.

The successful reduction of the budget deficit, through careful management by the headteacher, has enabled the school to appoint a deputy headteacher for the first time in four years. A new phase leader for Key Stage 1 will take up her post in September. This will give the school a leadership team who will be able to take on the full range of leadership roles. Child protection procedures are secure and meet current government requirements; staff have received the appropriate training.

The local authority's action plan is sensibly focused on whole-school improvement, encompassing the key areas for improvement which were identified in the inspection in October 2005. It has been effective in helping the school to make good progress. The LA has given suitably extensive support to the school. The school improvement adviser knows the school very well and has worked in partnership with the headteacher to carry out a series of rigorous monitoring activities. Her support is highly valued by the school. Support from an advanced skills teacher has been well directed and very effective. It has helped to enable teachers to make significant improvements to their practice. The school has greatly appreciated the positive support from the ISP consultant.

The school is well placed to continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector