



Mr John Womersley
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Dear Mr Womersley

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday, 13 March 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit with Marianne Young HMI. Please pass on our thanks to staff, the chair of governors, your local authority adviser, and to the pupils we talked to during the visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 24–25 January 2006, the school was asked to:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 2 to 5.
- Involve the children more in their learning and in the life of the school.
- Make better use of the skills of staff with management responsibilities to lead on improvements.
- Increase the effectiveness of development planning and of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

Teaching and learning have improved. During a series of staff meetings, teachers considered what makes for good teaching and learning. They now share a better understanding of what is required. Helpful guidance has been issued. There is more good teaching and learning now than a year ago, including in Years 2 to 5. Teachers plan more interesting lessons and link work in different subjects in meaningful ways; for example, they ensure that pupils have many opportunities to practise their writing skills. Teachers work

hard on behalf of pupils. Their classroom displays are often of a very high quality. They show off pupils' work to very good effect, providing a stimulating environment for learning and information that is helpful to pupils as they work. Teachers mark pupils' work more effectively than before and involve them more in judging how successful lessons have been and what the next steps are. However, within this positive picture of improvement, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning remain, and more improvement is required before the school can be confident that all pupils are taught well.

Pupils are much more involved than they were. The school now has a democratically elected school council, which provides an effective conduit for discussions and decision making between pupils and senior staff and governors. Councillors have made an impressive start, supervising arrangements for Red Nose Day. They look forward to playing their part in the school's plans for development. Teachers enlist pupils' support in assessing their learning. For example, at the end of lessons, teachers now routinely ask pupils whether they have achieved the main purpose of the lesson, or, if they haven't, what they did not understand. Although not yet fully consistent in quality, this process is helping teachers adjust subsequent lessons to ensure that pupils reach their learning objectives.

The school is better led and managed than before. This is because leadership roles have been shared out better and given to more teachers. The deputy headteacher and teachers with specific responsibilities now play a much more prominent part in leading on new developments and in monitoring the work of their colleagues. Their work is proving beneficial, with gains in the knowledge of staff in English, mathematics, science and special educational needs, for example. Governors, too, are sharper in their supportive and accounting roles. All of this has been achieved with no loss in the previous strengths in the leadership and management of the school, and it continues to have a good and inclusive ethos and be a school where staff work together well as a team.

The school is now in a strong position to know how well pupils are doing, and whether they are making good progress. The old, cumbersome records have been replaced by effective, computerised tracking systems that show, at a glance, what progress each pupil is making over time. Senior staff and subject leaders check progress at least once each term and go into lessons to check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Where the school feels standards should be higher, in pupils' writing, for example, teachers build up portfolios of their work which they examine to provide targets for pupils tailored to meet their specific needs. Data is used well, such as in deciding which pupils should receive special work to help them catch up, or which pupils should be challenged more to achieve higher standards. As with other key issues, this monitoring and evaluation aspect of leadership and management, although much improved over the year, is not fully effective,

since teaching and learning are not consistently good. An increase in the focus and the rigour with which issues are followed up is required to ensure further improvement. The school's development plans have the virtue of being concise and easily understood, but lack the means for management to know what success in completing them will mean for pupils, or timescales to check whether the plans are on schedule.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector