

28 February 2008

Mrs Sarah Lloyd
Netherthorpe Primary School
Netherthorpe Street
Sheffield
S3 7JA

Dear Mrs Lloyd

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 February 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also give my thanks to the pupils and chair of governors.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on 2-3 October 2006, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in mathematics, English and science across the school
- ensure that teaching in the Foundation Stage focuses on promoting the specific knowledge and skills required for pupils of this age
- ensure that teachers take full account of the information gained from checking progress to meet their pupils' different learning needs and raise their achievement
- use the information gathered from evaluating the work of the school to improve teaching and raise standards.

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.

At Key Stage 2, the school's 2007 national test results improved at expected levels in both mathematics and science, with an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels in mathematics. Results in English, however, were disappointing and declined in 2007, due in part to the number of pupils entering the school during Year 6. Results in Key Stage 1 improved in all core areas. With the exception of the number of pupils attaining the highest levels in mathematics, performance in reading, writing and mathematics increased in 2007. Whilst remaining low, standards are now rising in both key stages.

The school works hard to settle the high number of pupils joining the school partway through the academic year into school life. Close monitoring ensures that they continue to improve both academically and personally. Skilled teaching assistants also provide very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. Evidence seen during the monitoring visit, including lesson visits and tracking information, indicates that accelerated progress is now evident in all classes across the school.

In the Foundation Stage, children start school with skills and capabilities that are well below average, especially in communication, language and literacy skills and personal and social development. The majority of children join the school with English as an additional language. Staff work hard and are thorough in identifying and providing for children's needs. Children make good progress, although they still join Key Stage 1 with skills below those expected for their age.

Internal lesson observation records show that the proportion of good or better teaching is continuing to improve. During the monitoring visit all lessons seen were good with no satisfactory or inadequate teaching observed.

Across the school, planning is comprehensive and assessment information is well used. In the best lessons, there is a real vitality to learning and pupils work hard, enjoy their lessons and are fully involved in the assessment of their work. Pupils generally understand what they are learning; many know their curricular targets and they are positively encouraged to reach higher levels of learning. Detailed marking gives clear guidance on how to improve and is understood by pupils.

The overall quality of teaching in both Key Stage 1 and 2 is good and it is most effective when differentiated activities ensure that all pupils make progress in their learning. In the Foundation Stage, there are clear improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Staff plan work based on accurate assessments enabling them to provide well matched and challenging activities to secure the progress of children. Good quality teaching now promotes both children's achievement and enjoyment of learning.

The headteacher is providing strong leadership to drive forward the improvement agenda and is enabling everyone to play their part. She is well supported by an effective and committed senior leadership team. Arrangements to check pupils' academic progress and the quality of teaching and learning have strengthened considerably and are now rigorous and thorough. The analysis of pupil attainment information through, for example, pupil progress meetings, ensures that individual pupils at risk of underachieving are targeted and supported quickly. Intervention is now clearly showing signs of success. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching have a clear emphasis on how pupils are learning and their resulting progress.

Staffing is now stable: all have embraced change enthusiastically and are committed to building on the improvements made since the previous inspection. Performance in core subjects is closely monitored by the senior leadership team. The school recognises that the role of leaders in other subjects is yet to be developed fully. The school, however, knows itself well and is fully aware of the further work required to

secure improvements in standards for all pupils. There is a clear 'culture of learning' within the school.

Through accurate self-evaluation, effective performance management and good professional development, the school continues to grow as a learning organisation. It is working very effectively with the local authority, who have provided good support as the school builds further capacity at all levels.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector