

21 May 2008

Mr P Berresford  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Berresford

### Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 20 May 2008, the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to the subject leaders, the pupils, the chair of governors and the representative of the local authority (LA) with whom I met.

Since the last inspection there have been some changes to staffing with the return from maternity leave of one member and another member of staff from illness absence. The deputy headteacher has assumed responsibility for pupils with special educational needs.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 1 October 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress across the curriculum but particularly in mathematics
- raise teachers' expectations of what children can achieve in mathematics so that work is better matched to children's needs
- plan more exciting tasks to enable pupils to explain, justify and apply their knowledge of mathematics.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and raising the pupils' achievement.

Standards in Key Stage 1 are broadly average and progress is satisfactory. Evidence from the school's data and pupils' work suggests that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average with a rise in the number of pupils working at the higher Level 3 in all three subjects. Progress in Key Stage 2 is also satisfactory with particularly good progress in Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that standards

by the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement in mathematics on standards reached in 2007. This is due to better teaching, a focus on mathematics and planning activities which more suitably match the needs of the pupils. However, the school is aware that there is still some work to be done to further raise standards and accelerate progress across the curriculum.

Five lessons were sampled during the monitoring inspection and this confirms the school's view that the quality of teaching and learning is improving and becoming more consistent. Staff have attended an extensive range of training courses, both in school and externally, which has given them valuable ideas on planning exciting activities in mathematics. Two teachers have observed good practice in teaching at another school. The senior subject leaders have modelled good teaching and provided coaching for some staff. There is room for the school to provide more opportunities for staff to observe good practice in teaching both inside the school and in other settings. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, senior subject leaders and the local authority have carried out a set of joint lesson observations. Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled. Pupils' work and teachers' plans are monitored regularly by key subject leaders and useful feedback has been given to staff. As a result, planning is more detailed and includes practical activities to make learning fun, encourage pupils to explain their thinking and move learning on. Pupils report that work in mathematics is more varied, getting harder and more enjoyable resulting in increased understanding and confidence. They particularly appreciate the increased support from adults to support their learning.

The school is at the early stages of reviewing the curriculum. In some classes teachers have linked subjects together and encourage pupils to use their English and mathematics skills in these subjects. Although this practice is not consistent throughout the school, leaders are aware that this method of working offers opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of mathematics.

The school has made good progress in how it uses assessment information. Checking pupils' progress takes place regularly and systems for recording progress in reading, writing and mathematics are in place. Every teacher contributes assessment information which is scrutinised by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior subject leaders. Regular meetings to analyse the progress pupils are making are held with each teacher. As a result, the school has a clearer picture of where underachievement lies. Assessment information is now starting to inform how teaching groups are organised, the deployment of additional adults and the use of support programmes. The school recognises that this information can be used more effectively to further raise teacher expectations for all groups of pupils.

As a consequence of the headteacher's resolute leadership, the school responded positively after the inspection in October. Together with the senior leadership team, he effectively analysed the issues raised in the report. Long standing issues relating to teacher absence have been resolved leading to raised morale amongst staff. Regular monitoring of the school's work has been rigorous and developmental, as well as supportive. Good involvement by the governing body is playing an important role in supporting and challenging the work of the school. The local authority has

provided very good support for the school, working with senior leaders and governors to create a clear plan for improvement and providing professional help. The school has effectively kept parents informed of changes within the school and developments since the last inspection. The school is proud of improvements, recognises there is still some way to go and is determined to move forward as a whole-school team.

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

Yours sincerely

Eileen M Mulgrew  
Her Majesty's Inspector