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31 March 2008

Mrs Linda Shute  
The Headteacher  
Rowdown Primary School  
Calley Down Crescent  
New Addington  
Croydon  
CR0 0EG

Dear Mrs Shute

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 March 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and the chair of governors for the time they gave.

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 20-21 March 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that all teachers use assessment information more effectively when planning lessons
- monitor teaching more effectively so that all weaknesses are identified and addressed
- develop the role of the governors so that they are better placed to carry out their duties and contribute more effectively to the management of the school.

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 in raising the pupils' achievement.

The standards pupils reached in the 2007 assessment tests rose in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils made better progress and there were particular improvements in English and science. Attainment in mathematics remains a weakness. The school now has better systems for assessing and tracking the achievement of pupils and uses this information more effectively to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress, and to target extra help. Termly assessment information and the work in pupils' books show that more pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age. The rate of progress is still patchy in different year groups.

Teachers plan lessons with activities designed to match pupils' different abilities and there is some good evidence of targeted support for less able pupils. There are also some examples of good quality marking which guides the learning of individual pupils. However, the work in books and that seen in some lessons indicates that this careful match of work to ability does not always happen in practice. Teachers share the learning objectives for each lesson with the pupils but there is a focus on how pupils will be occupied rather than on what they will be learning. In some classes, the overuse of worksheets and adult directed activities limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and extend their learning. In the satisfactory lessons, pupils are attentive rather than excited by their learning.

Extensive monitoring by all senior members of staff ensures that they have a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Major weaknesses in teaching have been tackled successfully. As a result, teaching is now usually at least satisfactory with an increasing proportion that is good or better. Given the history of staffing turbulence and high turnover, the focus of monitoring has understandably been on improving the quality of teaching. There has been less emphasis on monitoring being used to improve the quality of the learning. This is also evident in school improvement plans, where targets are not sharply focused on pupils' achievement.

The governing body has been revitalised by the appointment of a new chair and several new governors. More effective meetings and an improved committee structure are in place and, although the changes are relatively new, governors are increasingly involved with the school. They are providing good support and have a much better understanding of the information needed in order to provide more effective challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald  
Her Majesty's Inspector