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24 February 2009

Mrs Amanda Rush  
Headteacher  
Leesons Primary School  
Leesons Hill  
St Paul's Cray  
Orpington  
BR5 2LS

Dear Mrs Rush

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 11 February 2009, for 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 governors, the local authority representative and the pupils who spoke to me about the school.

As a result of the inspection on 11 June 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English and mathematics across the school and make sure that all pupils achieve their best
- increase the pace and challenge in lessons to accelerate the rate at which pupils learn
- improve the quality of the teaching and assessment in the Foundation Stage and provide more opportunities for children to learn through independent play
- improve the attendance of those pupils whose record is unsatisfactory.

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 and in raising pupils' achievements.

Evidence, including school data, lesson observations and pupil workbooks, suggest an improvement in standards. The majority of pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress, and many are making good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are doing particularly well, but some other year groups are making slower progress. This is because the legacy of weak teaching is still having an impact on the rate of pupils' progress. To remedy this, the school has undertaken a thorough analysis to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to ensure that planning and teaching are focused on their needs.

There are significant improvements in teaching and learning. Monitoring of teaching by the school and the local authority indicates that all teaching is now at least satisfactory or better. Pupils' behaviour and enjoyment of lessons are good. This is because teachers have positive relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of behaviour. Good questioning, linked to the learning objective, and a practical and interactive teaching approach support the good pace of learning in the better lessons. Talk partners are used to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively; a good example of this was observed in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils retold a traditional tale to each other. Teaching assistants provide pupils with good support. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm and industrious places to work. These have a language-rich environment, are well organised and have high-quality work on display. Since the last inspection, rigorous procedures have been implemented for assessing pupils and tracking their progress. Assessment maps outline areas for testing for each half term, with results entered into the tracking system by staff. Tracking grids are used to inform decisions regarding intervention groups and to address underachievement in specific areas. The development of these clear systems for monitoring pupils' progress, together with well-focused support to meet the needs of all pupils, has had a significant positive impact on pupils' progress.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved in the Foundation Stage. The members of staff in the Reception class work together closely, sharing their expertise. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, and both are well used to extend the children's thinking. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has built up a detailed knowledge of what the children know and can do through careful observations and assessments. She has a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for development and is meticulous in her daily evaluations.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She leads the school with enthusiasm, dedication and a clear commitment to improvement, especially in relation to the progress pupils make. Senior leaders have clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the school based upon a rigorous programme of monitoring and self-review. The success of the headteacher in developing the leadership skills of staff at all levels has been marked. Many of the staff display good evaluation skills and use challenging targets to drive up standards. There is now a real sense that everyone in the school is united, working as a team to bring about the required changes. There is a clear focus on raising standards and promoting good progress.

The school has worked hard to improve attendance which still remains below national figures but is improving. The family support worker has identified and gathered detailed information which is being used effectively to support key pupils and their families.

The local authority has provided satisfactory support for the school. It has produced a satisfactory statement of action which sets clear timelines and is explicit about how progress is to be measured. The challenge for the school now is to ensure that the increased rate of improvement seen on this visit is maintained and that the good practice is embedded fully into its work.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria  
Her Majesty's Inspector