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Mr Alan Haigh and Mrs Charlton  
Executive headteacher and senior leader  
Tetsworth Primary School  
15 High Street  
Tetsworth  
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Dear Mr Haigh and Mrs Charlton

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 Thursday 24 September 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, your pupils, and in particular the member of the governing body, the local authority school improvement adviser and the strategic lead for governance, the previous acting headteacher and the executive headteacher, who, at short notice, all met with me to talk about the school's work.

After the retirement of the permanent headteacher in the summer term 2005, the governors were unable to recruit a suitable practitioner to the substantive post. With the support of the local authority, there were two temporary appointments, before an experienced part-time interim headteacher was asked to lead the school in September 2007. Around the same time, the governors, supported by the local authority, began to enquire into the possibility of federation with a local school. A deal was finally brokered with John Hampden School, a successful primary school, at the start of September 2009. The executive headteacher of John Hampden has full oversight of both schools.

Following the last inspection, the acting headteacher's post was increased to full-time. At the end of the last academic year, there were a number of staff changes and almost half of the teaching staff joined the school at the start of September 2009. The new appointments include a permanent senior teacher from John Hampden School who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and, in particular, for improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is also a part-time teacher in Key Stage 2 and two teaching assistants, one for each phase. The movement of families from the area has led to a slight fall in the numbers of pupils on roll.



As a result of the inspection on 13 January 2009, the school was asked to: improve teaching and learning, particularly from Reception to Year 2, in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards; provide Reception children with more opportunities to learn through play; ensure that marking gives all pupils clear guidance on how well they are doing and that it helps them to improve their work; and that all teachers and governors are fully involved in improving the school and take more responsibility for pupils' progress and standards.

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 pupils' achievement.

In 2009, there was a significant improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and assessment data confirm that the small number of pupils made better progress when compared with previous years. Most pupils in Reception achieved or exceeded the skills expected in almost all areas of learning, particularly in communications, language and literacy. At Key Stage 2, while the unvalidated results were significantly higher in mathematics, they were similar to the previous year's in English and science. School data indicate that most pupils are making better progress, including the higher-than-average proportion of pupils with specific learning difficulties.

The improvement in results is linked to the increased emphasis senior leaders are placing on learning becoming a stimulating activity that motivates pupils. Teachers are creating a more positive learning environment in which, as they indicated, 'pupils can be shown how to learn'. Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning under the previous acting headteacher. Staff have responded well to the internal and external support and advice they receive. This includes the monitoring and evaluation of their work, as well as opportunities to take part in training and to work alongside leading practitioners. Consequently, they have become more 'comfortable and confident' about the next steps needed to improve the quality of teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress. Within a short time, the new senior teacher has made a good start to analysing the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the next steps have been clearly mapped out to ensure that teaching is consistently effective. The school is aware that there is still more to do.

Under clear and purposeful leadership, planned changes to the Early Years and Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have started. The learning environment has been re-structured and further re-organisation this term, subject to funding, is planned. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop pupils' communication and literacy skills. In addition, there is a new planning format and tracking and assessment systems have been introduced enabling staff to observe, record and map the progress of all children from the time they enter the school. The curriculum is being reviewed, with the senior leaders and staff ensuring that the right model is selected through researching into and trialling materials.



Marking has improved, through the use of colour coding to identify strengths and areas for improvement, a running commentary and a summative comment with targets on pupils' work. Pupils are clear that this approach helps them to know their targets and improve their work. Books are monitored, staff have a clear policy as a reference point and they have been trained in the latest approach to assess and track pupils' progress. During this visit, a scrutiny of pupils' books indicated that there is still more to do to ensure that marking is consistent throughout all subjects and that pupils are encouraged to take pride in their presentation.

Although the federation is new, it is making a difference and contributing well to the school's identification of the next steps necessary to accelerate pupils' progress. Senior leaders are building on the policies and changes introduced by the previous acting headteacher, who began the process of change. Leaders and managers have made sound moves to bring about stability and coherency to planning as well as to leading and managing the school. For example, continuity has been ensured through links with the previous acting headteacher and the new governing body includes a balanced representation of experienced governors from each school. Governors and teachers have taken part in a range of training to involve them in the monitoring of the school's work. As a result, there is increased accountability and confidence about how to drive improvement. Structures have been set up to enable Tetsworth staff to work closely with leading teachers at the John Hampden School. Consequently, opportunities have been provided to enable them to participate in paired work, training and sharing models of good practice. At this stage, it is far too early to evaluate the full impact of the new systems and structures on improving outcomes. The school acknowledges that there is more to be done and further opportunities are planned to broaden the teachers' experience.

The local authority has been a key driver in the improvements. The authority has revised and updated the statement of action and provided a range of effective support tailored to the needs of the school. It has used the task group well to monitor the school's progress and adjust support as necessary, for example, the setting up of the federation and provision for the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs. As a result of the increasing changes, including the stability and commitment of senior leaders, who are well supported by the staff, the school has demonstrated that its capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

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 faithfully

Carmen Rodney  
Her Majesty's Inspector

