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Mrs Geraldine Mappley
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Dear Mrs Mappley

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 October 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils and governor who spent time talking with me.

Four new teachers joined the school this term, and one last term, so over half of the teaching staff have changed since the last inspection. The senior management structure has been altered this year. There are now two assistant headteachers, one with responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and the other with responsibility for Key Stage 2.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils, particularly those who find learning easy, are consistently challenged in lessons
- raise the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6
- strengthen the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluation
- improve guidance for pupils by embedding the systems for tracking pupils' progress and improving the quality of marking.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

satisfactory progress in making improvements

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The provisional results for the 2009 national tests show a substantial increase in the proportions of Year 6 pupils attaining the highest level in English and mathematics

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bringing them closer to the two thirds that attained the highest level in science. These results are higher than the national average in each subject. They represent an overall improvement in Year 6 attainment since the last inspection and a substantial increase in pupils' progress between Years 2 and 6.

The 2009 national assessments for Year 2 show broadly average attainment. Since the last inspection, girls' attainment has improved but boys' attainment has slipped, with fewer than average reaching the higher levels. The 2009 assessments at the end of Reception show a drop since 2008 in some areas, particularly communication, language and literacy. The school has rightly identified a need to improve early literacy provision and has put in place appropriate curricular changes and intervention, but it is too early for them to have had impact.

The school's targets for attainment were met, although some were insufficiently challenging.

Last year, the school focused successfully on improving achievement in Year 6. It was not at the same time able to address as concertedly pupils' attainment in Year 2. However, you and the governors took well-planned steps that have reorganised staffing for this year in a suitable way to provide better progression from Nursery to Year 2. The new staff team is working well together, with shared enthusiasm to bring about improvement.

The teaching I observed jointly with you was satisfactory and included good elements. Teachers recognise well the need to extend high attainers, but do not consistently provide sufficiently challenging activities for them. Pupils say they enjoy lessons but sometimes find the work too easy. The lesson observations made by leaders last year identified some aptly focused areas for development, but activities to pinpoint such areas and support associated improvement for current staff have not yet taken place this term.

Following the last inspection, subject leaders monitored pupils' work and performance to inform evaluative reports they produced about provision and pupils' achievement. Some of their findings contributed to appropriate actions being included in the latest school development plan. However, the style and quality of evaluation were variable. This year there are new post holders for almost all subjects. While management time has been set aside for them, it is too soon for them to have become involved in monitoring and evaluation.

Leaders and class teachers are increasingly effectively using records of each pupil's attainment each term in writing and mathematics to identify those who need extra support and to target intervention appropriately. Every pupil's progress is evaluated carefully against the high expectations the school sets for each term, as is the overall progress of the group of higher attainers. Sometimes the progress for separate terms is not aggregated on the records; the tracking system does not conveniently inform the longer view by including an annual target for each pupil or a

calculation of how far their attainment is above or below it. Tracking of progress in reading is improving following staff training on guided reading, but is at the early stages of implementation for some classes. Although pupils' progress in science and information and communication technology is not tracked against targets each term, the school has begun to address this by introducing a science assessment package. Marking remains inconsistent but has a number of strengths. You and I identified some good quality marking that gave pupils clear steps to help them improve. However, we saw instances where feedback did not specify how or when pupils should build on the teacher's comments.

The school's own evaluation has accurately identified key areas for development that have led to appropriately targeted actions in its plans. Training, together with new policies for teaching and learning and for feedback, is increasing consistency in these areas. However, with such a high proportion of new staff, more time is needed for improvement to become embedded.

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

Gill Close
Her Majesty's Inspector