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Mr C McNerney
Headteacher
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Dear Mr C McNerney

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 October, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to your staff and pupils for taking the time to speak to me.

As a result of the inspection on 9-10 September 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise achievement, particularly in mathematics and ensure that targets are sufficiently challenging.
- Improve systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and use the information effectively to identify and tackle any underachievement.
- Ensure that feedback and marking enables pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Raise standards in communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

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

satisfactory progress in making improvements

and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Most year groups have attained standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that are above average and these standards remain above average by the end of Year 6. In the most recent tests, standards in

mathematics in Year 6 were average and the standards of that year group were average when they joined the school. Targets for pupils in the current Year 6 indicate that they are on course to reach standards that are again above average. Pupils' learning in lessons is satisfactory. Through successful monitoring and support of teaching the school has worked hard and successfully to ensure that there is no inadequate teaching in mathematics. Pupils have the chance in lessons to engage in partner talk and group work which makes their learning of mathematics more enjoyable. Their behaviour and attitude to learning is good. The headteacher recognises that the standards for higher attaining pupils need to be higher.

The school has made significant progress in introducing a new assessment system that enables senior leaders to monitor the progress of pupils more closely and identify early on those pupils who are not doing as well as they could. The senior leadership team has been enhanced through the recent appointment of a deputy headteacher. The headteacher and other senior leaders have a very accurate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching of mathematics in the school and have responded by improving the quality of lesson planning and providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently. The role of the subject leaders has been enhanced through greater monitoring of pupils' work and lesson planning but their role in monitoring teaching is less well developed.

The school has made satisfactory progress in ensuring pupils know what they need to do to improve. In lessons pupils know what their learning objectives are and whether they have been achieved. Some older pupils know precisely what level they are working at, for example, one pupil said she was at level 5 in mathematics because she knew how to multiply and divide two-digit numbers. Other pupils are less clear on their current level of attainment and how to reach the next stage in learning. The best marking shows pupils how to improve their work through clear written development points or questioning. Elsewhere, marking is less precise. Pupils are involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers and they are able to say if they have successfully achieved their lesson objectives, including those pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils have a greater say in their learning and take responsibility for their own work.

The school has made good progress in raising standards in communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since 2006 there has been a rising trend in the proportion of learners who reach the national expected level for their age. In the most recent assessments three-quarters of learners in the Early Years Foundation Stage had achieved this level. The improvement in standards has been achieved by assessing learners earlier in the year, identifying learners who need additional support and providing appropriate support. A higher proportion of learners now attend the Reception class full time and there is a closer liaison with parents in supporting their children at home. Learners use language well to imagine situations with the equipment provided, for example using an upturned table as a boat, recreating roles and experiences through dressing up and using the playhouse to cook meals for visitors. Learners themselves have made choices about the creative areas such as a car wash, garden and space ship.

All safeguarding arrangements are in place and systems are robust.

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

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector