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Mr R Jordan  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jordan

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 23-24 November 2009 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the chair of governors, those teachers I interviewed and observed, and the pupils who gave time to talk with me about their work.

Since the last inspection an additional teaching assistant has been employed to support the more able Key Stage 1 pupils in mathematics and writing.

As a result of the inspection on 11-12 May 2009, the school was asked to

- Urgently address all remaining weaknesses in safeguarding procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Ensure that work in writing and science in Years 3 to 6 is better matched to the abilities of the pupils.
- Increase the level of challenge in writing and mathematics for the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Make better use of information gained from monitoring to eliminate variations in the quality of teaching, so that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress in all subjects.

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.

Since the last inspection, the 2009 end of Key Stage 2 test results and the end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments have been published. The 2009 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment has been steadily rising over the past three years and in 2009 it was slightly above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. Very few pupils attained the higher level 3 in writing and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009, pupils' attainment was higher than in 2008 and rose from below average to average overall. Pupils made satisfactory progress from the end of Key Stage 1 in English and science, and good progress in mathematics.

Immediately after the judgment at the last inspection where safeguarding was found to be inadequate, the school took immediate action. The local authority provided considerable support and training for staff. Risk assessments are now more rigorous and take into account a considerably wider range of school, class, group and individual activities. Procedures to ensure that safeguarding checks are carried out and recorded have been strengthened and are now secure. The National College for School Leadership safeguarding training has been undertaken by the headteacher and a member of the governing body. Governors are now more aware of their responsibilities in reviewing policies and procedures, and in ensuring that the school complies with relevant government requirements.

Following advice and support from the local authority, pupils now have more opportunities to write, and lesson plans in writing show that teachers are providing different activities for the range of ability groups in each class. Pupils say that writing lessons have become much more enjoyable and exciting because the tasks they are given are more closely matched to their individual interests and they are stimulated more to use their imagination. The recent introduction of a method of assessing and recording pupils' progress in writing is beginning to help teachers build progressively on pupils' current skills through identifying clearly their next steps in learning. However, this is not yet embedded and, although each ability group has its own activity, teachers are not planning carefully enough for the learning needs of pupils of different levels of attainment.

In science, similar staff development work has taken place to that in writing. Although no science lessons were observed during the inspection, lesson planning and work in pupils' books show that teachers are beginning to develop different ways of providing challenge for the range of abilities in each class.

In addition to staff training and support for the subject leaders, the school has received financial support from the local authority to increase the level of challenge for the more able Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in writing and mathematics. This has enabled the school to increase the number of times each week when selected pupils receive very close support from skilled teaching assistants. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of pupils' learning was good and, on one occasion, it was outstanding. In this lesson, the teaching assistant was clearly focused on what she wanted pupils to learn and pupils were motivated exceptionally well through

skilful questioning techniques, strong relationships and very effective use of a range of resources. However, because the increase in the number of small teaching groups is a recent initiative, the school does not yet have the information to enable leaders to evaluate the impact of this work on raising the achievement of the more able pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully improved the system for tracking of progress of groups of pupils. Greater rigour in the scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning has helped leaders become more aware of areas for further development and any variations in provision across the school. Leaders' monitoring shows that the quality of provision has improved and is starting to become more consistent. However, there is currently no information on pupils' progress to enable leaders to evaluate the impact of the actions taken to improve achievement.

School leaders, including the chair of governors, say that the local authority has provided good guidance and support in helping them address the issues from the last inspection. There was immediate action taken by the local authority in response to the shortcomings found in the safeguarding procedures and there was clear evidence during the monitoring inspection of improved provision in all identified areas due to local authority support. The local authority is correctly continuing to provide guidance to the school and monitor progress against all key areas through the statement of action.

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

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers  
Her Majesty's Inspector