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Ms S Crowther
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Dear Ms Crowther

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 2 and 3 March 2010, for the time the assistant headteacher gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Since the last inspection there has been a significant increase in the number of experienced teachers. Four teachers have been appointed and one teacher has returned from maternity leave. There is a full quota of governors. Several are extremely experienced. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased significantly. Where cohorts are particularly small, for example in Year 3, this has a disproportionate impact on data.

As a result of the inspection on 6 and 7 July 2009, the school was asked to:

- raise standards, ensuring that all groups received consistently good teaching and made good progress
- improve rates of attendance and punctuality by working with parents and promoting community cohesion
- provide greater variety in the curriculum.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment in English and mathematics remains below expectations in Years 5 and 6 where the majority of pupils are still overcoming significant gaps in their learning. Elsewhere, gaps in skills and knowledge are narrowing and the standard of work is moving towards the expected levels for many pupils. Computing skills are good in Year 6. Pupils competently created animated clips and interrogated a commercial



mapping program. However, in design and technology they manipulated basic tools and materials with some difficulty. The quality of their work was no better than that of much younger pupils. Mathematics in Years 3 and 4 was generally in line with expectations. The majority of the pupils have made good progress in mathematics since September. However the calculation task provided did not tax more able pupils who could already halve large decimal numbers mentally. Although many Key Stage 1 pupils were reading and writing at levels appropriate for their ages, there was little evidence of work at the higher level.

English and mathematics are taught systematically. Work is frequently set at levels to match the pupils' varied needs. Marking clearly indicates what has been achieved and where further work is required. Pupils take good notice of these comments. Consequently, all groups are making good progress in their learning, particularly in the quality and quantity of their written work. This substantiates the school's detailed records that show significant improvement in literacy and numeracy skills for all groups. Some impressive progress was evident among pupils who are having one-to-one tuition to boost their basic skills.

The majority of lessons were well planned and promoted good learning. Year 5 pupils eagerly studied an exemplary text, written by their teacher, correctly identifying parts of speech and using higher order skills to answer questions. The effectiveness of training and support was evident in the consistency of approach to behaviour management and marking. Skilful, well-prepared teaching assistants improved pupils' learning rapidly in classes and in individual sessions. Regular monitoring and support are helping to eradicate weaker aspects of practice such as insufficient use of discussions among pupils or wasting teaching time after swimming.

The thematic approach to curriculum planning, ably led and monitored by the assistant headteacher, has transformed provision and created a greater sense of community. Teachers plan together, spreading the preparation workload and sharing ideas. The current theme has resulted in excellent work in religious education, art and music across the school. Pupils are excited by outdoor learning and practical activities such as local river studies and science week. An excellent example of 'letting the children lead the learning' was seen in Year 2, where plans were amended to pursue the pupils' interest in Henry Tudor. The room was buzzing with motivated pupils eager to share information about Henry's visit to a local abbey.

Attendance remains below the average for primary schools despite the school's concerted efforts. Working with the local authority and other partners, it has implemented a wide range of appropriate strategies and interventions, such as letters to and meetings with parents, and escorting pupils to school. Outstanding successes include one pupil maintaining over 90% attendance from an average of 69%. However, high levels of mobility among pupils mean that the school frequently has to implement procedures with new families.



A substantial increase in the number of adults attending consultations with teachers is evidence of the school's improved partnership with parents. The governors' bold financial decision to have a non-class-based assistant headteacher has moved teaching and learning forward rapidly. Support from the local authority has been of a high quality and additional funding to keep teaching groups small has had a positive impact on the pupils' progress. Improvements in the quality of teaching, the rate of progress, curriculum provision and in the increased attendance of individual pupils indicate that the school is building well on its capacity to improve.

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

Cathie Munt
Her Majesty's Inspector