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Wednesday 17 March 2010

Mrs M Bull
Headteacher
Wednesbury Oak Primary
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Dear Mrs Bull

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 16 March 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils who took time to speak to me, and to your school improvement partner who met with me.

Since the last inspection, an additional post of assistant headteacher has been created. In addition, the posts of numeracy coordinator and special educational needs coordinator have new appointees taking on the roles.

As a result of the inspection on 17–18 April 2008, the school was asked to use the results of assessments and the information provided on individual education plans to plan work that is suitably challenging for lower-ability pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; improve the progress of girls in Years 3 to 6, by ensuring they play a full part in lessons; and improve the role played by middle managers so that more areas in need of improvement can be tackled at the same time.

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

When pupils join the school, their starting points are well below that found nationally for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, despite the gains that they have made in learning, their standards are still well below the national average. There is an improving trend at Key Stage 1 where the most recent assessments indicate that pupils' standards are broadly average. Pupils throughout the school



have made greater gains in their writing and in English overall than in reading and mathematics as a result of the school making this a high priority for improvement.

Since the last inspection you have considerably extended and enhanced the senior management team. However, as some of these appointments have been made within the last year, it is too early to see the outcomes of these changes in test results. Nevertheless, rapid improvements have been made in Key Stage 1 where the quality of provision is good. You regard all your senior leaders as 'mini headteachers' and they all take greater responsibility for the teams they lead, including the rigorous monitoring of teaching. They are held to account by you and by the governing body and they are working well as team, bringing a renewed energy and drive to the senior leadership team. You and your leaders know the strengths and areas for development in your respective areas of responsibility. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and the use of data to track pupils' progress and set challenging targets. Arrangements for safeguarding of pupils are thorough and detailed. The local authority has worked well with the school to secure improvements.

Girls take an active part in class and group discussions. Teachers ensure that through careful planning there are activities, such as partner talk, to extend opportunities for speaking and listening. Girls are confident to volunteer answers and many but not all teachers challenge those without their hands up to answer questions. Speaking is further enhanced by discussing real activities that have a purpose, for example preparing a letter to write to a former pupil.

The school's focus on improving writing has benefited lower attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, they have not made sufficient progress in reading at the start of Key Stage 2. The provision of extra-curricular activities such as maths and games clubs, and booster literacy sessions aimed at under achieving pupils, has engaged pupils who respond enthusiastically to these activities. Lesson planning consistently ensures that the needs of different groups of learners are met through learning objectives set at different levels of challenge. Good relationships in the classroom between teachers and pupils ensure that low attaining pupils can develop their confidence. Teaching assistants provide effective additional support. Pupils are beginning to become more involved in assessing their own learning.

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

