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Mr Keith Sharpe  
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Dear Mr Sharpe

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 27 April 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 new chair of governors, staff and pupils for their welcome and willingness to explain to me how they feel the school has improved.

Essentially the context of the school remains the same as at the last inspection. Improvements to site security and facilities have enhanced the pupils' safety and benefitted the learning environment. In common with schools locally, numbers on roll have declined and although there are three classes at present I note that this arrangement is unlikely to continue.

As a result of the inspection on 1 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve teaching to ensure that work offers challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able
- implement plans to improve progress in mathematics across the school
- extend the use of targets in lessons and through marking so that pupils have a clearer idea about the next steps for learning.

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.



Since the last inspection in 2008 attainment when pupils leave Year 6 has been raised with pupils making satisfactory progress. National test results for this age group were above average in mathematics and science in 2009 and average in English in what was acknowledged as a better year group. Anticipated results for 2010, based on teacher assessments of the current Year 6, are broadly average overall and are better than in the four years from 2005 to 2008. Whilst statistics for small year groups can be misleading, the two-year trend of improvement is reassuring in that the school's determined efforts to raise standards appear to be paying off. Observations and reference to the school's own records indicate that, notwithstanding improvements all round, pupils achieve better in English than in mathematics. Consequently, this remains an area for development.

Improvements have been very much underpinned by successful initiatives to develop the way teachers use information from assessment to plan work at different ability levels and set targets for individual pupils. The introduction of home/school target books has clarified what will help pupils to improve their work and has enhanced communication with parents and carers regarding progress. The growing partnership between staff, parents and carers bodes well for the future, as does pupils' now good understanding of what pupils can do to move to higher levels of attainment. Good progress has been made in establishing a more effective dialogue between teachers and pupils. Work is marked to indicate not only how hard pupils have tried but to show success against individual targets and overall learning objectives. The development of what is commonly known as 'assessment for learning' is proving successful. It draws pupils into gauging their own progress and helps them to be actively involved in observing and constructively criticising the work of others. This has led to improved success rates. It has considerably enhanced pupils' reasoning, speaking and listening skills, and the experimental and investigative aspects of mathematics and science. Examples of how well this is working were seen in a Years 5 and 6 literacy lesson where pupils made presentations on their own interests and were quizzed by their classmates. Similarly, in a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson on negative numbers the teacher skilfully developed pupils' evaluation of practical work on measuring temperatures. Extending this approach in other subjects is the next step identified in the school's own development plan.

Whilst target setting has benefitted all pupils, this has been particularly effective in ensuring that staff constantly seek to challenge potential higher attainers. The school's improved profile of attainment in both key stages in reading, writing and mathematics is the direct result of the better performance of more able pupils. This was clear in a Years R, 1 and 2 lesson where the teacher ensured the impetus created by her questioning of older, more able pupils encouraged other pupils. The session moved with good pace, was very enjoyable, and everyone made good progress in sequencing and mental agility.

The school's developing track record of improvements in attainment, the use of assessment and provision for more able pupils is indicative of growing strengths in leadership and management. This gives weight to the judgement that good progress has been made in developing a better capacity to sustain further improvements.



Unfortunately the falling roll is to result in staff redundancies. Such uncertainties leave the school vulnerable. However, through much improved monitoring by the headteacher and governors, and good support from the local authority, there is a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. Secure planning for the future is in place and is a good example of the school's much better position than at the time of the last inspection.

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

Mike Burghart  
Additional Inspector

