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17 March 2010

Mr Andrew Rowe
Melton Primary School
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Dear Mr Rowe,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you, for the help that you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 March 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information that you provided before and during my visit. I would be grateful if you could also pass on my thanks to the chair of governors and pupils.

Since the last inspection the school roll has fallen from by 29 to 139 pupils. As a consequence, staffing reductions have taken place and the school now has no deputy headteacher. An existing teacher has been given teaching and learning responsibilities.

As a result of the inspection on 10-11 April 2008, the school was asked to:

- refine the use of data so that staff are able to track pupils' progress and set individual challenging targets
- rigorously monitor teaching and learning so that clear strengths and areas for improvement are identified and used to improve teaching
- ensure that work more closely matches the range of abilities in each class so that all are appropriately challenged, particularly the most able

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.

Following the last inspection, progress made by pupils declined to below average. This led to a fall in standards attained in 2008. As a consequence the local authority provided satisfactory support that has been successful in helping the school to improve. Consequently, there are encouraging signs that both attainment and



progress are improving, although the variation between individual pupils remains wider than expected and persists through to year 6 when they leave. In 2009, progress made by most pupils improved and is now close to the national average and levels seen in 2007. The standards attained by pupils in 2009 improved, but remained below national averages. The school's own data indicate further improvement for 2010.

The school's monitoring of pupils' progress, and the standards they reach, has improved markedly since the last inspection. Systematic and accurate procedures are now in place. In addition, the school's use of performance data is much more systematic and is being used increasingly to set precise and challenging targets both for pupils and for the school itself. The school now has a good understanding of the progress made by its pupils. However, in most classes this information is not used effectively to ensure that pupils of differing ability learn effectively. Too often, the teaching that the least able receive is the same as the most able, and consequently they remain behind their peers. Assessment information is not used effectively to structure learning in class, and the use of lesson plans to aid this is underdeveloped. The precise role of Teaching Assistants in this process is not always clear.

The school has taken significant steps to begin the improvement of teaching. The lesson observation system is now more systematic than at the last inspection, and is securely linked to performance management. Overall, and with the support of the local authority, the school has a good understanding of its own teaching and recognises the issues that need to be tackled. Increasingly, teachers observe each other in class and as a consequence the school is beginning to share best practice. Having said this, the lesson observation system gives too much emphasis to teaching and what the teacher does rather than what pupils learn. As a consequence, opportunities to accurately evaluate standards in class are often missed.

The governing body effectively challenges the school and monitors its performance well. They have been instrumental in both recognising weaknesses and facilitating support where necessary. Improvement plans and associated targets are clear and give a challenging but achievable agenda for the further improvement of the school.

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

Ian Seath

Her Majesty's Inspector