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16 September 2010

Mr Robert Shenton
Headteacher
Summerbank Primary School
Summerbank Road
Tunstall
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 5HA

Dear Mr Shenton

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Summerbank School

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when Joanne Harvey HMI and I inspected your school on 15 September 2010 and for the information you provided during the inspection. I would be grateful if you would pass on our thanks to the pupils who spoke with us during the inspection, to the Chair of Governors and the representatives of the local authority.

Since the last inspection, the deputy headteacher has left the school and has taken up the headship of another school in a neighbouring local authority. An acting deputy headteacher commenced her duties at the start of this school year. A part-time teacher has been appointed to allow one of the literacy leaders to receive specialist training in the teaching of reading.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 January 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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 pupils' achievement.

Lesson observations, work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking information show that pupils' attainment remains below average. However, the 2010 end of Key Stage 1 teachers' assessments and the provisional end of Key Stage 2 test results show that, over the past year, pupils' attainment has risen at the end of both key stages. A significantly higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attained the expected age-related levels in both English and mathematics, and in Year 6 more than one half of the pupils exceeded this level in mathematics. The school's tracking

information and lesson observations carried out during the inspection show that, although pupils' progress and their learning in lessons remains satisfactory, they are beginning to accelerate, especially in Key Stage 2.

Although the teachers have undertaken training on using assessment information to match work to the needs of all pupils, the work given to pupils in some lessons still does not provide sufficient challenge. This is because teachers are not always clear about what they want pupils to learn in lessons and pupils are not guided well enough through the small steps which help ensure effective learning. In many lessons observed during the inspection the lack of focus on pupils' learning did not allow teachers to monitor pupils' progress or to correct any misconceptions that occurred. Senior leaders and the local authority are aware that improving the use of assessment to accelerate learning remains an important area for development.

Since the last inspection the school has introduced more rigorous, regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation processes, with all leaders much more involved in driving the school's improvement. They have a greater understanding of their role in raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of pupils' learning in lessons. Leaders are beginning to be held to account for pupils' progress and, through training, they are steadily developing the skills necessary to accelerate the school's improvement.

The school has introduced many strategies to improve pupils' attendance. More rigorous and regular analysis of attendance information, improved communication with parents and carers, rewards for regular attendance and greater involvement of external services have resulted in significantly improved attendance over the past year.

School leaders say that the local authority has provided good support in helping them address the issues from the last inspection. The local authority is continuing to provide appropriate guidance to the school and monitor progress against all key areas through the statement of action.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010

- Raise attainment to at least match the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6 by:
 - improving the rate of progress made by all pupils in their learning.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - in all lessons, assessment information is used to plan work that is matched to pupils' needs so that all are sufficiently challenged
 - pupils' learning in lessons is more effectively monitored so that misconceptions are quickly spotted and corrected.
- Improve the consistency of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all staff with leadership roles have increased opportunities to monitor and evaluate performance in their areas of responsibility and so contribute more fully to the school's improvement.
- Improve attendance further by rigorously implementing a wider range of strategies to promote good attendance.