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Mrs M Louca
Chivenor Junior and Infant School
Farnborough Road
Castle Vale
Birmingham
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Dear Mrs Louca

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Chivenor Junior and Infant School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

The school's context remains largely the same but several teachers have had long-term absences and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2011. A major building project has been cancelled because of the withdrawal of funding.

As a result of the inspection on 30 September 2009, 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 has made good progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Achievement is satisfactory and improving. Across the school, attainment varies considerably and is heavily influenced by the differing, but usually high, proportions of pupils who have special educational needs in each year group. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is low but they are making good progress, as are pupils at all key stages, particularly girls. The quality of learning is good since pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations and the effective organisation of purposeful tasks to develop understanding. Standards are higher in mathematics than in writing but the close attention being paid to developing the pupils' skills in literacy is remedying this imbalance.



The impact of stronger teaching is evident in the year-on-year increases in the proportions of pupils reaching challenging targets. The school's monitoring indicates that a significant amount of teaching is outstanding and there is much that is good. Observations by HMI confirmed that the majority of teaching is well paced, appropriately focused and effective in helping pupils develop confidence in their ability to learn. Questioning by teachers was often rigorous and well targeted at individuals. Relationships were good in all classes, enabling teachers to concentrate on essentials. However, some teaching is only satisfactory because of an over-reliance on undemanding written exercises to occupy pupils.

The intended pace of broad curriculum development has been hampered to some extent by staff absence and uncertainty about national policy. However, the school has pursued an initiative to group subjects in one of three faculties to aid the planning of integrated topics. Teachers in Year 5 are in the vanguard of work to enhance the relevance of lessons by staging imaginative starting points for a sequence of work and giving pupils a say in the direction it takes. These teachers report a significant rise in the pupils' attendance, commitment and enjoyment. The school has a suitable understanding of the importance of identifying age-related expectations for topic work to ensure that pupils are challenged and make progress. In nearly all classes, the development of more participative learning styles enables pupils to operate independently when appropriate.

Further work on developing the school's contribution to community cohesion has taken place to extend the pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity. The school is harmonious and there has been a decline in any racist comments.

The school was judged to have good capacity to improve when it was inspected in 2009. It has consolidated this position but long-term absences have restricted the development of the intended new management structure. School development planning is rooted in self-evaluation which is searching and accurate in its conclusions. Assessment data and their analysis, which were playing an important role in securing improvement, have continued to be prominent in the school's management. The school is extremely well informed about the progress each pupil is making and uses this tracking data to good effect. Regular pupil progress meetings with each teacher, for example, have been influential in securing higher standards. The data clearly show that the school's track record is improving and that outcomes rose sharply in 2010.

The local authority has provided consultancy support for literacy and numeracy which is suitably targeted and valued by the school.

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

Rob Hubbleday
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009

- Raise standards throughout the school by ensuring the teaching and learning are more consistently good or better through:
 - ensuring tasks match the needs of all pupils, including the most able
 - ensuring teachers use effective questioning techniques to assess the success of their teaching
 - devising lessons where the time is more effectively structured and used.

- Implement a curriculum that better enables pupils to:
 - use their knowledge, understanding and skills, including in information and communication technology, across the curriculum
 - develop independent learning skills that they can transfer between subjects.

- Help pupils learn more about the richness and diversity of British culture.