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Miss Gillian Francis
Headteacher
Hartington CofE Primary School
The Dale
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Dear Miss Francis

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hartington CofE Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks for their help to the member of the governing body and the pupils I spoke to.

Since the last inspection, a former headteacher has been employed to release the headteacher from her teaching duties for one day a week to provide her with dedicated headship time. Four pupils have joined the school mid-year which represents an increase in the school roll of 17%.

As a result of the inspection on 19 November 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

This is a very small school operating just two classes, one for Key Stage 1 and reception age pupils and the other for Key Stage 2. Most pupils are in Key Stage 2 and so that is a much larger class containing a mix of four year groups with a, consequently, wide spread of abilities. Teachers know their pupils' prior attainment well and are beginning to use this more effectively to plan a range of activities which are suitably challenging for all pupils whatever their different starting points. Pupils at Key Stage 1 were seen to be making better progress than those at Key Stage 2 because they are in a small class and because learning proceeded at a fast pace. Work in pupils' exercise books in both classes is regularly and diligently marked and teachers clearly work hard at this. Teachers write detailed comments summarising



what level of attainment the work demonstrates and what the child's 'next steps' in learning in this subject should be. Pupils spoken to about their work were able to explain what they need to do next to improve.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed pupil tracking sheets. These record each pupil's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics every half-term. The records are derived from teachers' assessments of pupils' work in lessons. They are confirmed by a regular series of tests derived from commercial schemes, as well as the optional national tests which are taken at the end of each year during Key Stage 2. Teachers meet regularly to moderate their assessments of particular pieces of work and this ensures that the information entered into the tracking system is reliable. A representative from the local authority has participated in some of the moderation work to ensure assessments at this school are consistent with assessments conducted in other schools. The school now has a system for monitoring the progress of all pupils which is used to identify any that are falling behind so that additional support can be provided to help them catch up. Tracking shows that progress remains satisfactory.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils are courteous and work well together in small groups or independently. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now high. Attendance was 100% on the day of this visit.

A timetable now sets out the annual cycle of self-evaluation activity. The views of parents and carers have been sought through a questionnaire which the school intends to repeat annually, and a member of the governing body attends meetings of the school council to hear pupils' views of the school. Together, these activities inform the school in evaluating its effectiveness and in setting out its immediate priorities in the school improvement plan. The governing body has asked the headteacher for interim reports six times a year on the progress the school is making on implementing the school improvement plan and on pupils' performance. A representative from the local authority has worked with the governing body to help them know what questions to ask of the school in better holding it to account. Although a process has now been established of cyclical review and identification of priorities, it lacks rigour. The review phase does not include benchmarking the school's performance against a range of national measures and the improvement plan is not sufficiently precise about the intended impact its implementation should have.

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

David Anstead
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate the progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 swiftly by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good
 - ensuring the learning of each pupil is carefully planned and sufficiently challenging.

- Develop a tracking system which provides regular and accessible information on progress through the school by:
 - ensuring a smooth transition between key stages
 - linking assessment information clearly to the planning of learning.

- Clarify the arrangements for school self-evaluation by:
 - providing a timetable for the completion of formal documentation
 - formally including a range of views from those with interests in the school
 - securing the systems for providing and analysing data, including those on pupils' performance and attendance
 - developing the role of the governing body in interim progress checks to ensure weaknesses are being tackled.