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Headteacher
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Dear Mr McMillan

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Peasmarsh Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 February 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 to your staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and the local authority representative for giving up their time to talk to me.

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone significant change. Three of the four classes are taught by staff new to the school. An acting assistant Headteacher has been in post since October 2010 to provide additional leadership capacity until the school makes a permanent appointment. The local authority removed delegated powers from the governing body in November 2009. Most governors have been recruited since that time and delegated powers were returned to the governing body in December 2010.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 July 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 good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils continue to enjoy school and have developed well as enthusiastic learners. The attainment of pupils who left Year 6 in 2010 was broadly average. This represented a significant improvement on the previous year when there had been a sharp decline in the Year 6 test results. Pupils in the current Year 6 are presently making satisfactory progress towards meeting the challenging targets the school has



set for their performance. The school's tracking information shows that the progress of pupils in Years 4 and 5 is beginning to accelerate which is leading to better attainment. Pupils' attainment and progress in English have been stronger than in mathematics for the last three years. The improvements made to the mathematics curriculum are successfully ensuring that pupils are now making greater gains in mathematics than previously.

Following the previous inspection, the local authority agreed an extensive package of support which has effectively improved staff skills. For example, teachers regularly moderate their assessments of pupils' performance with each other to ensure accuracy. Because this information now gives teachers a more accurate picture of the achievement of individual pupils, they set tasks which are satisfactorily matched to the differing abilities and ages of pupils within each class. During the visit, this was seen when pupils in one class were divided into four groups, each exploring the properties or nets of three-dimensional shapes at a level that enabled them to make good progress in their understanding over the course of the lesson. Sometimes, the proportion of the lesson given over to whole-class teaching is too long, limiting the time for pupils to test out new skills or knowledge for themselves in independent work. This is seen in pupils' books where the quantity of written work is sometimes insufficient. Pupils appreciate that teachers give them good encouragement when they mark work or through oral feedback, but pupils do not consistently have a good enough understanding of how to improve their work. There is evidence that an increasing proportion of marking is now providing pupils with more challenge to improve by setting a follow-up task, and this is a positive recent development.

Teachers have begun to review the curriculum with a view to making learning more interesting and coherent for pupils. New topics have been agreed which will provide the basis for more effective links to be made across subjects. However, leaders recognise that this is an area where development has been slow because of the number of staff changes. Good progress has been made in using information and communication technology to support learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to illustrate and enliven learning through well-chosen programmes. Pupils regularly use computers in lessons to practise skills and extend their understanding. Teachers effectively promote pupils' speaking skills by requiring them to explain their thinking and insist on accurate use of technical language.

Parents and carers and pupils spoken to are positive about the school, particularly commenting on its friendly ethos. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking on responsibility, for example as 'mathemagicians' leading playground games and making an effective contribution to promoting numeracy skills. The headteacher and governing body have worked well with local authority consultants to address shortcomings and build capacity for ongoing development. The governing body has restructured its committees and introduced clear terms of reference so that it now gives a strong strategic lead to the school, actively contributing to school improvement planning. Senior leaders monitor effectiveness regularly and give teachers good guidance on areas for development which, combined with appropriate professional support, has



led to significant improvements in teaching. The robust action taken has ensured that teaching has improved. The teaching seen during the monitoring inspection was good. The headteacher has established a strong staff team with good skills and expertise. Staff morale is high and there is a shared enthusiasm and understanding of where improvements need to be made and how this is to be achieved. Teachers work within teams, enabling individuals to feel supported and providing opportunities to reflect on effective practice. Self-evaluation is accurate and used well to prioritise improvement. Teachers regularly review pupils' progress with senior leaders and use their evaluation to adjust provision for individuals. The current strengths have had limited time to make an impact on pupils' achievement but there are positive signs that the rate of progress is accelerating.

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

Helen Hutchings
Additional Inspector



Annex

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

- Develop middle leaders and governance so that the responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are more distributed.
- Ensure all teachers and teaching assistants make the best possible use of assessment information in Key Stage 2 to match teaching to pupils' needs and speed up the rate of their progress.
- Link subjects better and use information and communication technology more as a tool for learning.