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Miss Rhian Cockwell
Acting executive headteacher
Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior School
Beaumaris Road
Toothill
Swindon
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Dear Miss Cockwell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 November 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Would you please pass my particular thanks to all of your pupils, but especially the group of Year 6 pupils I met, to your staff and to the chair of the school's governing body.

There is a range of factors that affect the progress the school has made since the last inspection. The school will become part of a hard federation with the neighbouring infant school in January 2011. Consequently, there has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection; you, as headteacher of the infant school, have been the acting executive head since September 2010. There have been other significant changes since the last inspection: the number of pupils in the school has fallen markedly; there have been significant staff changes, and the proportion of pupils from a range of different backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language has increased.

As a result of the inspection on 4–5 March 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' achievement has been declining for several years; at the end of 2009/10 attainment was low, and learning and progress, hence pupils' overall achievement,



was inadequate. However, as a result of the actions the school has taken since September, learning and progress is now good or better in the majority of lessons, although satisfactory in Year 3. The large majority of pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and work with enthusiasm. Significant attention has been given to improving pupils' writing. Teachers are matching activities to pupils' achievement better, although higher-attaining pupils do not always have sufficient challenge. Whole-class teaching is usually good, with extensive use made of effective questioning, but transitions to individual and group work often lead to a slowing of the pace of the lesson.

Pupils told me that behaviour is much better since September and the school is now 'much happier' and 'better organised'. They were very keen to tell me that the work they are set is no longer too easy for them and they enjoy being challenged. They are now clear about the school's expectations for their behaviour; rewards and sanctions are applied consistently. Pupils' behaviour is now at least good around the school and in lessons, and outstanding in some. Older pupils are also clear about their targets for the end of Year 6, know how well they are doing and how to improve. The school is working hard to develop this for younger pupils.

In addition to much-improved target setting for pupils, the school has introduced rigorous and systematic procedures for monitoring their progress. This regular monitoring results in more timely and effective interventions. There is systematic monitoring of the quality of planning and teaching; appropriate support is provided for those teachers who need it. The curriculum has been developed to provide better support for teachers' lesson planning.

The school's self-evaluation is now thorough and accurate and clearly identifies the priorities for improvement. The school improvement plan shows that appropriate actions are planned to deal with these, including the re-structuring of senior and middle leadership roles. The support given to the school by the local authority is now good and matched well to the key priorities for improvement. The leadership is now strong and the school is building its capacity to improve well.

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

James Sage

Her Majesty's Inspector



Annex

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

- Increase pupils' progress and raise their standards in writing through use of the whole curriculum for the development of writing skills and styles.
- Achieve greater consistency in behaviour management, particularly in situations where pupils are not directly supervised by teachers.
- Monitor pupils' progress through more frequent, detailed analysis and evaluation of their learning and use this information to check that teaching and extra support are being successful.