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21 February 2011

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Sharnford Church of England  
Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Allsopp

### **Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: leadership of more than one school**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 8 and 9 February 2011 to look at the leadership of the federation. Please pass on my thanks to the parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner who also gave up their time and made a valuable contribution to the visit.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgement included: interviews with staff, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and visits to lessons.

The effectiveness of the federation's leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is good.

### **Context**

The federation consists of All Saints Church of England Primary School, Sapcote and Sharnford Church of England Primary School. The schools were federated in September 2006 and are separated by a distance of one mile.

### **Outcomes**

- Pupils are making more rapid progress as a result of well-targeted teaching strategies that have been established since the schools were federated. These strategies are effective because they are based on an accurate understanding of pupils' individual learning needs. At All Saints,

Sapcote, gaps in pupils' prior learning are closing and the progress made by Key Stage 2 pupils accelerated significantly during 2009/10. The good progress made by pupils at Sharnford has been sustained, particularly at Key Stage 2. Assessment information indicates that the progress currently made by different groups of pupils does not vary significantly.

- Good behaviour across the federation has been enhanced further by a common behaviour policy. Older pupils at Sharnford, especially, value the consistency with which agreed procedures are followed when working with pupils at All Saint's, Sapcote, on a weekly basis.
- Effective systems in place to reduce levels of persistent absence at All Saints, Sapcote, are resulting in a steady improvement in attendance rates. Good attendance at Sharnford has been consolidated further because successful strategies to promote and reward regular attendance have been shared across the federation.

### **Provision**

- The quality of teaching has improved across the federation as a result of a well-coordinated approach to professional development. Joint lesson planning by staff teams has increased teachers' confidence to use a broader range of teaching strategies. Good practice is shared routinely through discussions about the effectiveness of planning and its impact on pupils' progress. However, opportunities to extend and build on existing good practice, for example, through peer observation and team teaching, are less well developed.
- The curriculum has improved because subject coordinators are developing schemes of work that interest and engage pupils, and increase opportunities for them to develop a broader range of skills for the future. Links between the two schools have resulted in a greater variety of trips, events and residential visits that enrich the curriculum for pupils of all ages. Since September 2010, pupils in Years 5 and 6, from both schools, have been taught together at All Saints, Sapcote, on one day each week to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy and also to benefit from specialist teaching, for example, in physical education and design technology.
- The strong Christian ethos that is evident in both schools has been consolidated through federation and promotes very positive and caring attitudes among pupils. The strengths in pastoral care identified in previous school inspections have been sustained and built on. This is the result of very good team work across the federation and the effective deployment of senior leaders who are a visible presence in each school.

### **Leadership and management**

- As headteacher, you have restructured leadership across the federation effectively to ensure that pupils' different learning needs are met. Staff have a clear understanding about their specific roles and responsibilities. They are particularly enthusiastic about curriculum developments that

enable them to draw upon their own areas of expertise when planning relevant and interesting programmes of study.

- Good opportunities for collaboration between staff across the federation have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and strengthened established systems further to support pupils' personal development.
- Rigorous systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress are used well by senior leaders to target strategies to raise achievement. Since the federation, regular progress meetings hold teachers more to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils across the federation.
- Resources are used well across the federation to improve the quality of provision, for example for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Sharnford.
- Pupils, staff and governors are very positive about the impact of being part of a federation. However, some parents and carers are less clear about how the federation benefits their children's learning experience at school.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- improving the consistency of good or outstanding learning by extending the range of opportunities for teachers to share good practice
- raising the awareness of all parents and carers about the impact of federation activities on their children's learning and personal development.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of the federation.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Sara Morrissey**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**