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Mrs M Knights
The Headteacher
Rownhams St John's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Knights

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Rownhams St John's Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils for their contribution to this monitoring inspection.

There have been significant changes in terms of the roles and responsibilities of members of staff. In addition, one member of staff left following a promotion, and the school has appointed two newly qualified teachers. The substantive Early Years Foundation Stage leader is currently on maternity leave. An additional community governor has been appointed. There are mixed-aged classes running throughout the school. The curriculum has been revised and is now taught through a more topic-based approach. At the time of this monitoring inspection part of the outside area was being remodelled.

As a result of the inspection on 7 December 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 is improving strongly in some areas. The school has made good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The quality of leadership and management in the school has been strengthened as a result of restructuring key leadership positions, improved governance, and senior and middle leaders developing their roles. This has led to the progress made in the quality of teaching and learning, and to levels of attainment rising more securely



throughout the school. Following the dip in results in 2009, pupils in 2010 made good progress in Key Stage 1 attaining levels that were significantly above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. Previous weaknesses in teaching led to some underachievement of older pupils in 2009. Although pupils in Year 6 progressed well in 2010 and more pupils than in most schools attained the expected levels in English and mathematics, they did not fully catch up with the gaps in their learning. Rates of progress in English and mathematics are currently best in Year 5 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress as a result of well focused support provided by skilled learning support assistants.

The school has improved the quality of its data collection. This, as well as other assessment information, is now used more effectively to guide the preparation of lessons. The quality of teachers' planning has improved and is more consistent throughout the school. However, although tasks have been identified to match the different abilities of pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy, that which has been planned is not always delivered as well as it could be, or in its entirety. The improved curriculum has contributed to more opportunities for pupils to learn in a meaningful context, such as work in mathematics linked to a visit to an activity centre in the New Forest. Pupils state that they appreciate the improvements made to their lessons and they display positive attitudes to learning. However, the quality of teaching in the school is not consistently good. This is mainly due to a slow pace of learning when, during the course of a lesson, teachers do not check what pupils understand and the progress they make. This results in limited challenge for the more able and some pupils remaining more focused on activities than on their learning. There are too few opportunities for paired discussions and this hinders the learning of less articulate and less confident pupils. There is not enough use of information and communication technology during lessons to support and enhance learning, particularly in English. The work in pupils' books is generally well marked. Pupils welcome having targets which they understand and to which they contribute.

Pupils recognise that modern day British society includes people from many different countries, cultures and faiths. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a visit to a Hindu temple and what they learnt about the Caribbean following a visually stimulating presentation by a parent. The school has made good progress in raising pupils' awareness of Britain's multicultural society. However, senior leaders recognise that there is still more to do, particularly in helping pupils to learn about the similarities that exist between different faiths.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good range of provision in the classroom, but provision and opportunities for children to use the outside area remain limited due to the remodelling and building work.

There is a clear vision shared by staff and governors. This is helping staff and governors to work more effectively as a team. Senior leaders undertake regular observations of lessons and follow up aspects identified for improvement. These



observations do not always record the learning and progress taking place, particularly for different groups of pupils. The improved use of data is helping leaders and managers to raise standards. Pupils at risk of underachieving are now identified more quickly and are targeted for additional support when needed. However, there are too few written evaluations of the progress pupils are making including comparisons of the performance of different groups.

The school has benefited from good external support provided by the local authority. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. The effective support for leaders and managers, including training for members of the governing body, has also contributed to helping the school to build on its capacity to improve.

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

Gehane Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that the work pupils are expected to complete in lessons is consistently well matched to their abilities, especially in literacy and numeracy, by ensuring that all teachers make full use of the available assessment information when planning work for pupils. (Timescale: by the end of the spring term 2010.)
- Provide pupils with regular opportunities to improve their cultural understanding, especially their awareness and knowledge of the multicultural nature of modern British society. (Timescale: by the end of the summer term 2010.)
- Improve the quality of the indoor and outdoor areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to provide a more stimulating learning environment for children. (Timescale: by the beginning of the autumn term 2010.)