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23 March 2011

Miss S Graham  
Headteacher  
Middleton St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Moor Flatts Road  
Middleton  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS10 3SW

Dear Miss Graham,

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Middleton St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 March 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. I would be grateful if you would extend my thanks to the staff, parents and carers, pupils and the representatives of the local authority and the governing body with whom I met.

As a result of the inspection on 5 and 6 July 2010, 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The attainment of pupils is rising. Recent assessments by the school show that pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining more highly in English than in mathematics and this pattern is visible in other year groups. Data provided by the school indicate that the trend of upward attainment in Key Stage 1, evident at the previous inspection, is continuing. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in English have been raised. A new handwriting scheme has been introduced and time has been allocated for practising handwriting. Along with a stronger focus by teachers on how pupils set out written tasks, this has led to improvements in the presentation of work. However, this improvement is not consistently evident in written work in some other subjects, such as science. More opportunities have been created for pupils to write at length. A weekly writing lesson has been introduced and pupils have opportunities to write in different genres and for different purposes. Pupils also have more opportunities to draft and edit their writing. Good writing is displayed around the school and in classrooms, but not all displays explain in detail the key features of exemplary writing. More reading resources have been purchased. There is also a stronger focus on teaching key spellings and on correcting spelling mistakes. However, not enough encouragement is given to older pupils to use dictionaries. In lessons, there is a greater emphasis on teaching

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grammar with the result that pupils' understanding of this is improving. Levels of homework have been increased and work in the 'learning logs' that pupils take home is more clearly linked to that completed in class. The school has begun to focus on raising mathematical attainment. Results of recent assessments have been analysed and intervention strategies put into place to address gaps in learning. A meeting for parents and carers has been held to explain the school's approach to mathematical calculations. While the amount of work completed by pupils in mathematics has increased, there remains a heavy reliance on worksheets. There are few displays about mathematics around the school that can inform and enthuse pupils. Action planning for this subject is underdeveloped.

Teaching has improved. Teaching has been monitored by senior leaders, initially with the help of the local authority. However, the school's view of the overall quality of teaching is more generous than the inspector's. Results of the monitoring of teaching are used to provide training and support for individual staff. Pupils' books are also checked, 'learning walks' conducted, data analysed and pupils interviewed. Feedback is given to staff and information drawn from these activities is discussed with teachers so that pupils who are underachieving can be better supported. The regularity of these meetings has been appropriately increased. Some whole-school training has been held on specific aspects of teaching, such as the use of questioning. There is scope to develop whole-school training on areas, such as the pace of learning and the effective use of summary sessions at the end of lessons. Greater use is being made of assessment data. This information is used to target additional support for pupils who are underachieving. It is also used by teachers to match work in lessons more closely to pupils' different abilities. The school has also used data to ensure pupils know the National Curriculum levels they are working at but their understanding of the levels they are aiming for is less well developed. Training has been held for teaching assistants. Marking has improved. It is more detailed in English than in mathematics or science. The school has taken steps to help parents and carers support their children's learning. Parents and carers have observed lessons and useful meetings have been held for them on writing, spelling, and handwriting. Helpful information booklets have been sent home, including revision guides on the core subjects for pupils in Year 6. The school is also hosting a course that will help parents and carers advance their children's literacy skills. The governing body has a general overview of the school's progress but does not yet have a clear enough picture of how pupils are performing in different subjects.

The local authority provides sound support for the school. Its statement of action was found to be fit for purpose following the last inspection and did not require amendment. Consultants from the local authority visit regularly to support the school, particularly in developing English. The School Improvement Partner and a local authority consultant provide useful reports on the school's progress.

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

Mr Michael McIlroy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 5 and 6 July 2010**

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science, so that at the end of Year 6 a greater proportion of pupils are securing at least the expected level of attainment, by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - increasing the focus on applying basic skills across the thematic curriculum
  - ensuring higher standards of presentation and handwriting, and better accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar
  - providing more opportunities to draft, redraft and produce extended pieces of writing
  - further developing strategies to assist parents and carers to support their children's learning beyond the school.
  
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, in particular at Key Stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use assessment data to fine-tune lessons' activities to better meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and ages
  - sharpen questioning skills in order to develop pupils' deeper understanding and provide challenge to the most able
  - increase pupils' engagement in their learning through providing carefully planned and stimulating learning activities.