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Miss Catherine Davis
The Headteacher
St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Devizes
Bath Road
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2AP

Dear Miss Davis

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Devizes

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body for their contribution to this monitoring inspection.

Some changes have been made since the last inspection. Two teaching assistants were appointed to support the learning needs of some children. A new associate governor was appointed. The number of pupils on roll has increased. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school during the school year is higher than in the past. Plans to open a new purpose-built school in early 2012 are underway.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 November 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.

Based on pupils' current work and the school's analysis of assessment information, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is low but improving. The proportion of pupils whose attainment is in line with that expected nationally is increasing, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make good progress particularly those who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils

enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is average and attitudes to learning are positive, with behaviour often exemplary.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving. In most lessons, pupils' needs are met well by challenging activities and questioning from the teacher. Teachers model good strategies for writing. Pupils have opportunities to work purposefully in pairs and groups to discuss their work. Work is regularly marked, clearly identifying strengths and points for improvement. Teaching assistants support individuals and groups well. In the Reception class, children move freely between the outdoor and indoor learning areas. Activities are well planned, varied and practical, with a good balance between those that are chosen by children and led by adults. Assessment of children's skills, knowledge and understanding is accurate and regularly updated and monitored. Consequently, children make good progress from low starting points.

In the few less effective lessons, introductions and explanations are too long with too much direction from the teacher. This limits pupils' time to develop their learning. Consequently, progress is slower and a few disengage, becoming restless.

The headteacher's ambition and drive for the school, allied to the targeted support from the local authority, ensure steady improvement. Senior leaders and managers have an accurate view on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make because of the regular and accurate monitoring and evaluation of lessons and assessment information. The senior leadership team and some members of the governing body have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where improvements need to be made. Most of the areas from the last inspection have been addressed well, but the school is aware that community cohesion remains an underdeveloped aspect. The recently appointed chair of governors is supportive and beginning to work in partnership with the headteacher. However, the governing body as a whole lacks a sense of urgency and commitment. For example, on some occasions, not enough governors are available at meetings to vote on important decisions. In addition, the new building has distracted governors from effectively supporting the school to improve more rapidly.

The local authority's statement of action meets requirements and the support provided is good. The support includes regular visits from the senior school improvement adviser, the school's improvement partner, literacy and numeracy consultants, the early years advisory team and governor support officer. In addition, the local authority brokered support from a local school led by a headteacher who is a National Leader of Education. The two schools have worked alongside each other productively. The impact of this work can be seen in the improvements in the quality of teaching, use of pupils' assessment information and the good provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010

- Consolidate the improvements made to the quality of teaching to raise attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 and reading in Key Stage 1 in particular by:
 - embedding firmly the new systems for teaching reading
 - ensuring that information on pupils' attainment and progress is used effectively to plan challenging work, especially for the more able
 - ensuring that all lessons are well placed to encourage more effective learning.
- Embed the improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the improved assessment procedures are used rigorously to enable an accurate picture of children's skills when they start school
 - providing more structured opportunities for children to choose their own learning activities and move freely between indoor and outdoor activities.
- Improve the provision for promoting community cohesion and cultural understanding by:
 - providing better opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures found in the United Kingdom and other countries
 - developing systems to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to promote community cohesion.