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Wednesday 13 July 2011

Mrs A Clayton
Headteacher
Singleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Church Road
Singleton
Poulton-le-Fylde
Lancashire
FY6 8LN

Dear Mrs Clayton,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Singleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 July 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, local authority adviser, staff and pupils who spoke with me.

Staffing changes since the last inspection include the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2010 and a job-sharing arrangement between two new teachers in the mixed-age Year 1/2 class, since January 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 12 January 2010, the school was asked to tackle 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.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are above those expected for their age. They are very well-prepared for the national curriculum, with the vast majority of children attaining well above-average levels by the end of the Reception class. Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 improved in 2011 and was well above-average in writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading was lower and has been identified as a priority for further improvement. Pupils continue to make at least expected progress across Key Stage 2. Attainment in the current Year 6 is above the level expected for their age in mathematics. Their attainment in English is broadly in line with national expectations.

Pupils' achievement in mathematics, which was previously too low, has improved considerably across the whole school. The headteacher and local authority consultant have led professional development for teachers, which has improved their subject knowledge and

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approach to teaching. Pupils of higher ability are provided with additional challenges through various interventions and well-planned activities in some classes. However, practice varies in other classes and pupils of different abilities are sometimes given the same tasks. Consequently, activities are not as well-matched to pupils' learning needs as they could be in those classes. All pupils do, however, have more plentiful opportunities to carry out investigations and apply their number skills. They thoroughly enjoy these and approach their work with enthusiasm.

Staff have shown drive and commitment to improve teaching generally, and quicken the pace of pupils' learning. Several new schemes, intervention programmes and approaches to teaching and assessment have been introduced during this year. The school is now in a position to evaluate the impact these are having and embed the most effective practice. Different approaches to marking, target-setting and feedback have been trialled across the school. Marking is more frequent and informative but varies in effectiveness. Advice is not always sufficiently followed through to subsequent pieces of work to tackle errors. Consequently, pupils' presentation of their work is inconsistent and not always commensurate with their ability. Pupils' attitudes to learning are nevertheless very positive. They are highly-motivated, co-operative and eager to learn. They particularly enjoy the increased opportunities for practical learning, debate and investigation. They feel extremely safe because staff are caring and supportive and children show consideration for each other.

Developments to improve transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are at early stages but already having a positive impact. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been given more scope to share effective practice and develop provision across Key Stage 1. Practical activities to enable pupils to explore, investigate and develop their skills independently have been introduced into the Year 1/2 classroom. Meetings are taking place with parents to help them prepare for transition this year. There are also planned meetings between the Reception and Year 1/2 class teacher to discuss each child's learning profile and needs in order to plan for progression.

School leaders are driving improvements with energy and enthusiasm. Staff have worked hard over the last year to implement a number of new initiatives brought to the school by the headteacher. They share the vision and are fully-committed to improving provision and raising achievement. Effective systems have been introduced to monitor provision and track pupils' progress. These are at early stages of implementation and leaders have rightly reduced the number of planned activities in order to focus on the most important aspects. Subject co-ordinator roles have been underdeveloped in the past and staff have welcomed opportunities to take on further responsibilities over the last year. They are developing their skills in monitoring and action planning with support. The co-ordinators' files provide a good basis for further development. Members of the governing body have developed their role considerably since the previous inspection. They have a more active role in monitoring and a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The recent improvements in leadership and teaching together with processes and systems that have been put in place provide a good foundation for further improvements.

Local authority support has been appropriate since the last inspection and responsive to the school's requests.

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

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place 12 January 2010

- Raise achievement in mathematics by challenging the more-able and developing the ability of all pupils to use key number skills to solve problems.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by enabling subject leaders to monitor and evaluate practice and support colleagues.
- Improve transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by sharing the good practice and developing methods of working together.