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6 July 2011

Mrs A Vaughan  
Headteacher  
Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School and Nursery, Ware  
New Road  
Ware  
Hertfordshire  
SG12 7BT

Dear Mrs Vaughan

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School and Nursery, Ware**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 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 governors and the School Improvement Partner for their participation.

The school has undergone considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection: the acting headteacher has been appointed to the substantive post; the new deputy headteacher is currently on maternity leave as are two experienced teachers; and five teachers have joined the school during the year, including three who are new to teaching. In addition, many members of the governing body are new to their role.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 February 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 has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school's data show that pupils' achievement is improving. Attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 2 although the proportion attaining the higher level 3 is lower than average. The results of tests taken by pupils in Year 6 show that an average proportion of pupils reach the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. Although improving, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 does not yet match national figures. Staff and governors acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that more-able pupils are provided with sufficient challenge to attain higher levels. Attainment in other year groups is similar to or slightly above that expected for pupils' ages, indicating a rising trend of improvement. Pupils' rates of progress are

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also improving with almost all pupils making expected progress and increasing proportions making better than expected progress. Observations showed pupils' learning was generally sound and underpinned by positive attitudes and a willingness to work hard. The school's focus on writing is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' ability to use adventurous vocabulary. However, basic skills of spelling and punctuation are not well established among the oldest pupils. The school has responded by providing a daily programme of teaching about letters and their sounds.

The school's comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress offers many opportunities for senior leaders to analyse performance data. Data are shared regularly with governors, who ask the school's leaders challenging questions. Each half term the headteacher meets every teacher to discuss each pupil's progress. This process is effective in raising teachers' awareness of how to use data as well as in holding them to account for pupils' achievement. Concerns about the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' levels of attainment have been resolved through regular training and moderation exercises supported by local authority consultants.

My brief observations of sections of lessons in Key Stage 2, carried out with the headteacher, confirmed her view of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were observed exploring a range of activities planned to increase opportunities for them to gain independence in learning. The school's participation in a project to improve the quality of teaching, led by the School Improvement Partner, has had a positive impact on raising teachers' awareness of the features of good teaching. The challenge now is to ensure that all teachers demonstrate these features consistently. Much work has been done to establish key elements of lesson planning such as clear learning objectives and 'steps to success' so that pupils know what is expected of them. Marking is often detailed and helpful in identifying what pupils need to improve. However, challenge is often provided through open-ended tasks without sufficient difference in the activities given to pupils of different ability.

Subject leaders are growing into their roles and are increasingly involved in monitoring the quality of provision, including through direct observation of teaching. They are gaining experience of providing constructive criticism to their colleagues and of raising expectations of staff. They recognise what is working well and what still needs to improve. Secure foundations for improvement have been laid. Systems and agreed practices need time to become embedded and applied consistently in order to have the intended impact on improving pupils' outcomes.

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  
Jane Wotherspoon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2010**

- Improve progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
  - improving the consistency and quality of teaching so that it matches the best across the school
  - improving teachers' expectations of what pupils can do
  - improving planning to ensure appropriate challenge for the range of ability groups within each class.
  
- Improve the quality of independent learning and creativity in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing increased opportunities for children to make choices and decisions about their activities.
  
- Strengthen the role of subject coordinators and leaders by providing opportunities for them to observe the quality of teaching in their subjects.