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Mrs L Tapsell  
Headteacher  
Colsterworth Church of England Primary School  
Back Lane  
Colsterworth  
Grantham  
NG33 5NJ

Dear Mrs Tapsell

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Colsterworth Church of England Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 September 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 members of staff and pupils who spoke with me.

There have been changes to staffing since the last inspection. A long-serving full-time teacher has left and been replaced with another full-time class teacher. The organisation of year groups has changed. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes: Year 1 with the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 2 with a number of Year 3, the remainder of Year 3 with Year 4, and Year 5 with Year 6. There have been modifications made to the building to create a large Early Years Foundation Stage Unit with an adjacent outdoor area, which has also been extended. Provision for those pupils with a special educational need and/or a disability has been reorganised.

As a result of the inspection on 17 May 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.

Since the last inspection, there are signs of improvement in pupils' achievement. From broadly average starting points, most children reach the levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage. An increasing number are exceeding them. This represents at least satisfactory and increasingly good progress, particularly in the development of

communication, language and literacy skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 improved in 2010 but these improvements were not sustained in 2011. While attainment remained broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, it fell in reading and writing. Too few pupils reached the higher grade in these subjects. Leaders have reorganised staffing and provided additional resources to try to ensure that these pupils who did not achieve as well as they could have done in Key Stage 1, make accelerated progress this year and do not get left behind.

A decline in attainment in mathematics evident at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was successfully halted and reversed in 2011. Furthermore, evidence from school data and pupils' work confirms that the current Year 6 are on track for above average attainment in mathematics and the number on track to attain the higher grade has increased significantly. Attainment in reading also continues to be strong. However, weaknesses in writing meant that, while attainment in English remained broadly average, it declined in 2011, with the number gaining the highest grade being particularly disappointing. While evidence in school confirms that the current Year 6 are on track for at least average attainment in writing, school leaders recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that pupils reach the levels of which they are capable. However, it should also be acknowledged that this represents a period of accelerated progress for these pupils which has ensured that they have caught up after a period of slower progress in earlier school years.

Though there is some variation in other year groups, most are on track for broadly average attainment. The progress pupils make in their learning is mostly satisfactory. For an increasing number it is good. Where teaching is consistently strong and additional interventions are well focused, school data confirms that progress is accelerating. This is not the case in all classes.

Attendance is much improved and is now slightly better than average. The consistently good and sometimes better behaviour was a distinctive feature throughout the monitoring visit. Pupils display highly positive attitudes to learning, are tenacious and respond to encouragement and challenge well.

The headteacher has astutely evaluated precisely what needs to be done to address identified weaknesses. She has begun to draw on, to encourage and to develop further the capacity of other school leaders and staff to ensure that they take responsibility and play their full part in driving forward whole-school improvement at a good pace. The response has not always been swift or consistent enough. However, strong developments have been seen as a result of strengthened leadership of special educational needs and Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Here, leadership has a firm determination to bring about rapid change and the results are being seen clearly in improved outcomes for pupils.

The cycle of monitoring and evaluation activities is becoming more rigorous, with all teachers having the opportunity to be involved. Importantly, there is now a whole school system for assessment, and class teachers have responsibility for compiling and analysing the assessment data for their pupils. They are held increasingly to account for their pupils' performance. They have become more adept at planning activities to meet the needs of different abilities. However, this does not always result in pupils of all abilities making good progress in lessons. This is because, for example, class teachers do not always engage with all pupils often enough to check if the work planned is too easy or too hard or if their expectations for the task have been understood. Consequently, planned tasks are not modified in the lesson and the pace of learning for some pupils slows. Pupils spoken to are positive about the revised system for marking and feedback and say it helps them to improve their work. Some good examples of developmental marking were seen, although leaders acknowledge the system is not being applied consistently across school.

Significant changes have been made to the Early Years foundation Stage learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. It is much improved since the last inspection, although leaders acknowledge that its full potential is not being fully exploited. Planning and assessment systems have been overhauled. Assessment is regular and thorough so adults know children well and plan to meet their needs accordingly. The impact of this can be seen in improving outcomes for children. Systems for recording assessment do not always fully reflect this thoroughness. Though much improved, planning for learning outdoors is not as purposeful as that for indoors.

School leaders have revised school policy and action planning to improve the promotion of community cohesion. A range of additional activities have been incorporated into the whole-school curriculum plan. The impact has yet to be fully evaluated. However, pupils spoken to say they value the additional first-hand opportunities they have been given to learn about and interact with others from communities, faiths and cultures which are different to their own and that this is helping them to understand the importance, for example, of tolerance and respect.

School leaders say that they value highly the support provided by the local authority. Particularly the Professional Advisor in supporting the improvement of teaching and learning, the Birth to 5 team in support of the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage, a leading teacher in the development of assessment and the mathematics adviser in the promotion of higher standards in mathematics.

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

Joanne Harvey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Accelerate the rate of children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
  - teachers' assessments of children's learning take place in all activities and are recorded regularly in their profiles ready to inform future planning
  - planning for children's learning always promotes a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities
  - the outdoor area is used fully to promote all areas of learning.
- Raise standards through the school by making sure that
  - tasks match pupils' needs closely in all lessons
  - feedback to pupils gives them clear information about how well they have done and how they can make further progress.
- Broaden the community cohesion programme within the curriculum so that the pupils develop a good understanding of the social, religious and ethnic characteristics of peoples' lives, both nationally and globally, as well as locally.