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Mrs Ronke Soyombo
Headteacher
St Mary's Lewisham Church of England Primary School
329 Lewisham High Street
London
SE13 6NX

Dear Mrs Soyombo

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of St Mary's Lewisham Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 November 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the members of the governing body and the local authority representative who discussed the school's progress and to the children who talked to me about their work.

Since the previous inspection the governing body has assumed responsibility for the before-school breakfast club. The Early Years Foundation Stage accommodation has been remodelled to provide better spaces for learning and a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been appointed. The leadership team has been restructured and there have been a number of changes of teachers and support staff.

As a result of the inspection on 17 and 18 March 2011, 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.

Unvalidated data for the 2011 national tests show that a significantly higher proportion of Year 6 pupils gained the expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics compared to the previous year. The school's own assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' work show that, although there is some variability between year groups and small pockets of underperformance, rates of progress

have been improved and pupils are generally on track to achieve their challenging targets. Planning is now reviewed regularly to ensure that it provides for better continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Teachers are increasingly taking account of pupils' interests and specific learning needs and some examples of high quality planning were seen.

Monitoring of teaching and learning has ensured that the school is better informed about strengths and areas for development in teaching. Almost all teaching has improved in quality and the majority of lessons are taught at a brisk pace, have a good variety of activities that are closely matched to the needs and prior attainment of the different groups of pupils and good relationships are evident at all levels. In the less-well-taught lessons time is not used productively and pupils are expected to spend too long listening to the teacher. This results in inattentiveness and some low-level off-task activity which can disrupt learning. Other adults in the classroom are generally used well and often have specific roles and responsibilities that are defined in the teachers' planning. Professional development opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants have enabled them to improve their practice and be more actively involved in promoting learning.

Appropriate systems and procedures ensure that the school has an accurate and timely understanding of pupils' achievements. Pupils who are falling behind or who have additional needs are quickly identified and appropriate guidance and support are provided to help them with their learning and development. Teachers' marking of pupils' work provides helpful advice on how to improve or develop work, but it is not clear that this advice is routinely followed up by some of the pupils concerned. Most pupils are clear about their targets but some do not understand how their current work contributes to achieving them.

Improvements have been made to the assessment system used in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, the school has a more accurate and reliable baseline from which future progress can be measured. Regular and systematic assessment and recording of children's achievements informs teachers planning, which also takes account of children's needs and interests. Parents are encouraged to contribute to assessment by noting their children's achievements at home. Children in both Nursery and Reception classes were seen to enjoy their learning and make good progress. The lack of suitable covered outdoor space in the Nursery area limits the range of activities that can be provided during inclement weather.

The local authority statement of action closely matches with the needs of the school and meets Ofsted's requirements. The local authority has supported the school in evaluating progress and brokered focused support provided by other education professionals, including a National Leader in Education. The school has particularly valued the support of the local authority in dealing with personnel issues. The impact of the actions taken can be seen most clearly in improvements to the quality of teaching and in the acceleration of pupils' 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

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2011

- Raise attainment and achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that planning provides for a coherent progression of learning.

- By September 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all teaching is securely satisfactory or better by ensuring that:
 - the pace of learning in all lessons is lively and new learning is introduced appropriately quickly
 - activities are well matched to what the teacher wants the pupils to learn
 - teaching assistants have the necessary skills to support pupils effectively.

- By September 2011, improve teachers' use of assessment so that:
 - assessment is used to match work to the needs of individuals and to provide appropriate levels of challenge
 - marking consistently gives pupils guidance about how to move their learning on.

- By December 2011, improve achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - carrying out more frequent assessments and ensuring these are used to match the activities to individual children.