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10 February 2012

Mrs C Chivers
Headteacher
Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School
Cinque Ports Avenue
Hythe
CT21 6HS

Dear Mrs Chivers

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and the pupils gave when I inspected your school on 9 February 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

The context of your larger-than-average school has not changed markedly since its previous inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 December 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 good progress in making improvements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' standards and progress are above the current government floor standard. The focus on developing pupils' reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills has been intensified. Consequently, attainment is rising most notably in writing in Key Stage 1. The school's thoroughly moderated assessment information shows that pupils are now making better progress. Nine lessons were observed during the inspection. In five, pupils were making good progress and in the remaining four, their progress was satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning because lesson activities are more closely matched to their needs. They appreciate the variety of tasks that are generally well sequenced and supported by good-quality resources, including ready access to computers. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the increased opportunities to work actively and independently. Most engage well with the good range of

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purposeful contexts for practising their writing skills. However, there are still occasions when progress slows because teachers over-direct learning instead of investing time in pupils applying new skills and understanding.

All pupils have targets for improvement. In Key Stage 2, these are linked clearly to levels of attainment within the National Curriculum. With more regular self- and peer-evaluation, pupils' ownership of these targets and understanding of how they connect with class work are developing steadily.

The quality of teaching

Teachers have access to a broad range of assessment information and are increasingly effective in planning lessons that build on pupils' strengths and tackle weaknesses. Where teaching is most effective, teachers' good subject knowledge is combined with the highest expectations for work and behaviour. The pace of learning is driven with energy and enthusiasm. Skilful questioning evaluates and deepens pupils' understanding. There are extended opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned. Precise, well-timed interventions stretch their thinking and maintain a sharp focus on the key learning objectives. Success criteria and examples of good and excellent practice are shared so that the quality of pupils' work is continually improving. The school is sharing these strengths systematically and a growing proportion of teaching is good or better.

There has been an effective focus on improving marking. The whole-school policy is being implemented consistently. Regular marking pinpoints strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' work and there is evidence that pupils are responding to teachers' guidance.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school provides an orderly, welcoming and stimulating learning environment where routines are well established. Pupils behave well. They are safety-conscious, aware of risks they may be exposed to and strive to show consideration for others. The warm and positive relationships throughout the school are an important factor in pupils' enjoyment of learning and school life. In this harmonious community, pupils from all backgrounds get on well together. Teachers and other staff display consistently caring, supportive attitudes towards pupils both in lessons and around the school.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Systems for gathering and analysing performance data have been considerably strengthened. The progress of groups of pupils and individuals is reviewed regularly. Effective target setting helps to accelerate pupils' progress. Staff are clear that they are accountable for pupils' progress. Evaluation of their impact on improving outcomes for pupils is integral to performance management. A cycle of lesson

observations is established. Ongoing good quality, professional development is clearly linked to the school's accurate self-evaluation and the areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection. The growing capacity of middle leaders to evaluate the work of their teams autonomously is underpinned by effective training and opportunities to observe practice in local partner schools. Partnership working with a clear focus on improving provision and outcomes for pupils is a strength of the school.

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

Jacqueline White
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good across the school by:
 - ensuring assessment data are used to plan lessons so that work and resources are matched more closely to pupils' abilities
 - giving pupils more opportunities to share and evaluate their work during lessons
 - improving progress rates, setting more challenging targets especially for more-able pupils in English and mathematics, and ensuring marking clearly shows pupils how they can improve their work.

- Raise attainment in writing and improve pupils' progress by extending the range of activities across the curriculum for independent writing.