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18 October 2012

Christian Hamilton  
Clent Parochial Primary School  
Bromsgrove Road  
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Stourbridge  
DY9 9QP

Dear Mr Hamilton

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Clent Parochial Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 October 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass my thanks to the pupils, parents and governors for the time they gave to speak with me.

Since the last inspection the deputy headteacher has left the school. A new deputy headteacher has taken up their post from the start of this term. A temporary teacher is currently teaching in Key Stage 1.

As a result of the inspection on 6 March 2012, 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.

The 2012 Key Stage 2 un-validated test results improved sharply when compared to the previous year. This was also the case when the outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 are considered. These improved outcomes confirm the greater effectiveness of the support provided for pupils at risk of under-achieving. The most recent outcomes also suggest the school is making progress ensuring pupils attain as well in mathematics as they do in English, though pupils' achievement is rising, the majority of lessons seen, required improvement. The improvement in progress is largely because leadership and management are more effective, particularly the use of data to hold teachers to account and to better target interventions. Pupils, parents and governors are all much more aware of the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets because key data is widely accessible.

The enhanced curriculum is increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning. Year 3 and 4 pupils enthused about the mathematics they undertook to help them in constructing bird boxes. Year 5 and 6 are excited about the learning associated with their 'shipwrecked' topic. Recent investigations into icebergs provided ample opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills. In the lessons seen, opportunities were missed to link the mathematics being taught to real-life problems and at times this limited the challenge for pupils. An exception to this was an outstanding mathematics lesson where pupils really enjoyed the challenge of creating questions that would test other pupils.

There are inconsistencies in how well teachers are using 'success criteria' to help ensure pupils of different abilities are challenged. In the less effective lessons these are largely a set of tasks to be completed that do not aid pupils, particularly the more able, in appreciating precisely what they must do to excel. Although pupils have challenging targets, these are not referred to sufficiently in lessons. While work is planned for different ability groups in lessons, the tasks pupils undertake do not always allow pupils to move quickly onto work that is appropriately challenging. An exception to this was the highly effective mathematics lesson where pupils could choose the question they found most challenging. Questioning in this lesson was clearly influenced by the teacher's assessment of previous learning. Timely interventions were made using examples from pupils' work to tackle any misconceptions and to identify precisely what was needed to attain at the highest level. In the majority of lessons seen opportunities of this kind were not taken.

Marking has improved and this is having a positive impact because teachers are ensuring pupils have opportunities to respond to their comments. However, insufficient attention is being given to ensuring pupils can effectively assess how well they and their peers are doing using robust criteria, for instance, based on national curriculum levels. Parents praised the school for the sensible approach it takes to the setting of homework because this prepares pupils well for their move to the high school.

In the Early Years Foundation stage the greater attention being given to number work is improving outcomes in this area. There are strengths in the links that have been developed with the nursery and with parents. Opportunities are sometimes missed to exploit all resources to the full, for instance, through more frequent reviews of the learning associated with child-initiated activities.

The improvement to the use of the information gathered about pupil progress and the effective steps taken to improve outcomes this year indicate that leadership and management are becoming more effective. The governing body has responded well to outcomes of the last inspection. Governors have a more astute awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Crucially they are now much more involved in monitoring the key outcomes so they are well placed to hold senior leaders to account. The new deputy headteacher is an excellent role model in the classroom and has brought important expertise in terms of the teaching of mathematics.

The school is holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make through regular meetings that involve senior leaders. This rigour is also being brought to the new arrangements for performance management, although it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. The school's arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of its interventions have been proved to be highly effective. This thoroughness is evident in all aspects of planning. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and suitable attention has been given to ensuring developments are fully monitored and evaluated.

Staffing difficulties have limited the progress the school has been able to make improving the quality of teaching. Staff spoke positively about the more effective training they now experience. They like the fact that more time is allowed for the implementation of new ideas.

The external support the school has experienced has been effective. The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose and there are strengths in terms of how it is encouraging the school to work with other effective schools. The headteacher spoke enthusiastically about the opportunity he has to work with another successful leader. The school is positive about the support it has received relating to teaching and 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

Kevin Sheldrick  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012**

- Raise the quality of teaching in mathematics so that pupils make good progress in all classes by ensuring that:
  - assessment is used to plan work that consistently meets pupils' learning needs
  - pupils know, understand and use targets in lessons to improve their work
  - marking consistently includes comments that tell pupils the next steps in learning and gives them the opportunity to respond
  - regularly planned opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that :
  - whole school initiatives to improve teaching are clearly understood by staff and rigorously monitored for consistency and effectiveness
  - specific programmes to support pupils at risk of underachievement are formally monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness in helping these pupils to make accelerated progress
  - the governing body is more involved in holding the school to account for its effectiveness in accelerating progress.