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18 October 2012

Mr M Rixson  
Headteacher  
St Peter's Church of England Aided Junior School  
Church Avenue  
Farnborough  
GU14 7AP

Dear Mr Rixson

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of St Peter's Church of England Aided Junior 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 on my thanks to members of staff and pupils for their time and welcome.

Since the last inspection, the school has extended the senior leadership team and their responsibilities. Three teachers have left the school. Four new teachers have been appointed, including an advanced skills teacher and a part-time teacher who works with small groups of pupils each morning to support their specific learning needs. The roles and responsibilities of learning support assistants (LSAs) have been revised. The curriculum has been revised further to ensure pupils have more opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in topic work. Procedures have been strengthened in the use of pupil targets, using feedback to improve work and in assessing and monitoring pupils' progress over time.

As a result of the inspection on 14 and 15 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The headteacher, supported by other senior leaders, has brought about improvements quickly over the last year that has accelerated further since the last inspection. Leaders have created an open and cohesive approach with more opportunities for staff to share good practices, particularly through peer observations and coaching and closer working within year teams. Staff are very positive about the changes and feel involved in making decisions about the direction of improvements.

A comprehensive programme of staff training has ensured improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching and brought about positive changes to the way LSAs work with pupils. All pupils benefit from work that is being more tightly matched to their needs, especially the lower attaining. As a result, standards are rising quickly and the speed of learning is increasing rapidly. Pupils' good behaviour and very positive attitudes contribute well to positive learning experiences.

Work seen in lessons, pupils' books and in the school's own assessment information shows that standards and progress have accelerated quickly in all age groups. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 showed a sharp rise in both English and mathematics which returned to above the national average. More pupils than average reached the higher Level 5 in English although pupils attained in line with average for Level 5 mathematics. Pupils in other age groups reached higher standards than in previous years. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 made expected progress overall while in Years 5 and 6 pupils made good or better progress so are quickly making up for previous underachievement.

The quality of teaching has improved because of the focused work of senior leaders, support from local authority officers and an external consultant, key teacher appointments and increased opportunities to share teaching methods. Procedures for verbal feedback and marking of pupils work have been revised, agreed with staff and implemented consistently. Written feedback now identifies clearly the strengths and the next steps in learning and pupils are enthusiastic about the 'thumbs up' and 'wish' stamps. However, inconsistency exists in the quality of comments for pupils' next steps and in the expectation for pupils to respond. Too many comments are posed as questions rather than information or examples on what pupils need to do specifically to improve and not enough time is always planned for pupils to redo their work with the improvements. The verbal feedback seen in lessons was always good because teachers continuously check pupils' understanding and make timely interventions to help them improve. In the best lessons, teachers used effective questions to extend pupils' initial answers and to keep their work focused tightly on the lesson WALT (We are learning to).

The use of pupil targets has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils know their targets and understand their relevancy in helping them to improve their work. Targets are now visible in pupils' books and they are starting to use them more confidently during self-assessment and peer evaluation. Teachers refer increasingly to targets during lessons and in marking. In one good lesson, the teacher used them to check pupils' progress and to set their next challenge. All teachers plan work that matches and challenges the range of different abilities in their class although there is inconsistency in how successfully this is always transferred into lessons. In one very effective mathematics lesson, higher-attaining pupils were moved swiftly into challenging independent work on presenting data while the rest of the class continued to work with the teacher and then lower-attaining pupils had good teacher support during group work. The guided-reading sessions seen demonstrated probing questions by teachers and LSAs. This extended

pupils' independent thinking and reasoning skills and supported the development of their inference and deduction skills well. They inspired pupils' interest and knowledge of books so they recognised there was more to reading than just words on a page. The carefully selected books made a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Leaders have given good attention to strengthening provision for lower-attaining pupils and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement. The procedures for monitoring their standards and progress over time are secure and senior leaders are more adept at ensuring interventions make a positive change to pupils' learning. Monitoring information is used well for earlier identification of any pupils underachieving or who have gaps in their knowledge. They are subsequently targeted for short-term intervention programmes, including the morning sessions for small groups, and for additional teacher support in lessons. Communication, assessments and target setting by class teachers, the morning group leader and LSAs are more closely aligned to ensure pupils receive the right adult support at the right time. As a result, these groups of pupils make the same good progress as others in the school. Equally, they are becoming less reliant on adults and are more willing to find solutions to task for themselves.

The school improvement plan has been revised since the previous inspection and now includes sharper criteria to help leaders measure the impact of the actions and initiatives they have introduced on pupils' achievement. The annual programme of monitoring activities focuses firmly on the developments in English and mathematics. However, the opportunities to monitor pupils' use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects or the impact of the small group work is more limited.

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose and strategies support school improvement well. Local authority consultants have provided effective whole-school training and have worked alongside individual teachers in classrooms in a coaching and improving role. Officers have worked with senior leaders to moderate the quality of teaching. School leaders have been pro-active in using an external consultant on a regular basis to work with senior and middle leaders and to develop whole-school procedures. Senior leaders have modelled good teaching and have been pro-active in identifying and using effective practice from within the school through the peer observation programme.

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

**Judith Rundle**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it consistently makes a good impact on pupils' progress by:
  - providing pupils with clear and consistent feedback, including through marking, that tells them what they need to do to improve
  - establishing closer links between the targets in pupils' folders and their current work
  - improving the pace and challenge in lessons
  - ensuring that pupils have challenging and purposeful tasks in guided reading sessions.
  
- Strengthen provision and achievement for lower-attaining pupils and those whose circumstances or learning needs make them vulnerable to underachievement by:
  - ensuring that there are closer links between intervention activities and the learning that takes place in class
  - providing more practical support for lower-attaining pupils to enable them to become independent in their learning and less reliant on the support of teaching assistants
  - ensuring that during lessons teachers provide more direct and focused teaching for lower-attaining pupils and those whose circumstances or learning needs make them vulnerable to underachievement
  - embedding systems for monitoring pupils' progress over time to judge the impact of interventions and support.
  
- Refine plans for school improvement so that criteria by which success can be measured focus more sharply on the impact the school's actions have on pupils' progress and attainment.