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29 January 2013

Mrs P Kennedy  
Headteacher  
St Mark's CofE Primary School  
Brantridge Lane  
Haywards Heath  
RH17 6EN

Dear Mrs Kennedy

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to St Mark's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and the acting assistant headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated. Documentation about teachers' performance management and the use of the government additional funding, known as pupil premium, was discussed. The inspector joined the headteacher on a tour of the school to meet teachers and pupils.

**Context**

Following a period of staff absence, the senior leadership team of the school has been reorganised and now consists of the headteacher and an acting assistant headteacher.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher has taken a clear lead in tackling areas for improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school's action plan deals clearly with the areas identified for improvement. It contains challenging but achievable goals and is supported by a 'timeline' which is shared with staff. This is used by the headteacher to check that planned actions are being achieved on time. However, key dates on the timeline are not consistently recorded on the master action plan.

The headteacher is ably supported by the governing body. Members have a very clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are actively involved in visiting and reporting on the school's progress. Governors are now recording progress and identified next steps on the action plan but these observations are currently undated. This, and the lack of key dates from the timeline, makes it difficult for governors to keep an overview of how quickly the school is improving.

Comprehensive systems to set targets and monitor the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 have been established. Targets for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have not yet been included. The school is now more able to identify which individuals or classes are making the best progress and which may need additional support. Regular observations and reviews of teachers' performance are being used well to help teachers understand more clearly what is expected of them. Senior leaders are aware that improving the quality of teaching remains a priority for the school.

Senior leaders and governors are beginning to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- help the governing body to maintain an overview of progress by making sure that key steps and evaluations are consistently dated and recorded on the master action plan
- include targets for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage within the whole school monitoring process.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

## **External support**

The school is making good use of the support available from the local authority. This has been both timely and effective so far. Training is taking place for staff in school. Teachers are also visiting other schools to see different ways of working.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex.

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**