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26 April 2013

Steven Etherington  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Church of England VA Primary School  
St Mary's Road  
Tetbury  
GL8 8BW

Dear Mr Etherington

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to St Mary's Church of England VA Primary School, Gloucestershire**

Following my visit to your school on 26 April 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 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders. We had a meeting to look at current information about attendance. I met with the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. I had a meeting with a representative from the local authority. The school raising achievement plan was evaluated. During our tour of the school together we talked to pupils and looked at their work.

**Context**

There have been no staffing changes or changes to the governing body since the inspection in January 2013.

## Main findings

In the weeks following the inspection you have taken steps to raise the attendance level of pupils. These actions are supported by parents. Fewer pupils are late or away from school, than previously. Your new computerised data system is enabling you and senior leaders to access the information about how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics more accurately and efficiently. You have rightly identified that some pupils are not yet achieving as well as they can in mathematics. The use of progress information in mathematics would be even better if it was used more precisely to hold teachers to account for their work and thereby support the subject leader in her role of leading the subject.

Your English leaders are taking forward initiatives in reading, such as introducing more regular opportunities for pupils to read to adults. You have raised the profile of reading by involving the school community in setting up the new library. English leaders say that pupils are enjoying the new books. As we discussed, it will be important to monitor and evaluate the impact of these initiatives on raising standards of reading across the school.

Your Chair of Governors has acted quickly to allocate governors to monitor the areas of improvement identified in the inspection report. This initiative is working particularly well for increasing levels of attendance. Your improvement plan, however, lacks measurable success points that can be monitored at different time intervals. The plan would also be stronger if there was a clear distinction between the person responsible for leading the action and the person with responsibility for checking on the progress being achieved. In this way, each action could be assessed for its impact on improving the school's performance.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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:

- ensure that the teacher responsible for leading mathematics is coached by the headteacher to develop her skills in using pupil progress information diagnostically, so as to raise pupils' achievement
- make sure the improvement plan includes short term goals (milestones) to be achieved at timely intervals
- check that the improvement plan clearly specifies who is responsible for evaluating the impact of actions taken
- sharpen the success criteria in the existing plans to ensure that they are expressed in terms of their impact on pupils' achievement.

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

## **External support**

Your school appreciates the training from the local authority. Governors praise the work of the local authority in helping them to use their skills in a more focused way to challenge and support the school in taking the appropriate steps to becoming a good school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Gloucestershire and the Diocese of Gloucester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**