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20 May 2013

Mrs Noreen Vinall  
Headteacher  
Wateringbury Church of England Primary School  
147 Bow Road  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME18 5EA

Dear Mrs Vinall

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wateringbury Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of a partner school. During these meetings we discussed the action taken since the last inspection to bring about improvement. I also evaluated your school improvement plan. The Deputy headteacher accompanied me on a tour of several mathematics lessons during which time I was able to speak to pupils and look at their work. I was also provided with additional examples of work evidencing the progress you are making on improving the quality of marking.

#### **Context**

Shortly after the previous inspection you took the decision to retire, with effect from September 2013. Governors have appointed the Deputy headteacher to the role of

'Acting' Headteacher with effect from September 2013 and an advertisement has been placed to secure a permanent appointment.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection that took place in February, you and your governors have taken decisive action. Since announcing your retirement, you have worked closely with the Deputy headteacher, supporting her to take a firm lead on all aspects of the action plan to move the school to 'good' so that no time will be lost when you depart at the end of August.

You have effectively drawn on the skills and expertise of the headteacher of a nearby school, judged 'outstanding' at its last inspection by Ofsted, to help put together sound plans for improvement and to assist in evaluating the impact of your actions. All monitoring systems have been reviewed. There are now secure systems in place to track pupil's progress and monitor the impact of teaching on learning.

A new marking policy has been introduced and when I went into lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at their books I was able to gauge the positive impact of this work. I was impressed to see that all the pupils with whom I spoke were able to explain their mathematics work and their targets confidently. Governors have also begun to monitor this policy and have been able to evidence pupils' responses to written feedback on their work.

Lesson observations are taking place on a routine basis. When leaders observe teaching, the main focus is on pupils' progress, the level of challenge provided and the quality of teachers' questioning. Current progress data for Key Stage 2 is better than in the past and you are confident that this is attributable to the actions taken to-date.

With the help of the local authority the governing body has undergone an external review. Governors have also undertaken training on interpretation of data, such as the national comparative data contained in Raise Online. This has increased their confidence and capacity to ask the necessary questions and challenge you and your team if needed.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- tweak aspects of the plan that we discussed so that governors are able to identify who is leading and who, in addition is monitoring each priority, with clearly identified measures of success
- ensure that a focus on pupils' learning and progress from their starting points is central to all future evaluation of teaching and achievement
- ensure that no time is lost in securing a permanent headteacher.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided good support. Officers have brokered involvement of the headteacher of a nearby school and are working in close liaison with her. They have led a review of the governing body and provided necessary training on interpretation of data. They intend to provide further training in September for a newly appointed mathematics teacher who will lead the subject in Key Stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent and as below.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Farmer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**