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21 May 2013

Ms D Devine  
Headteacher  
Shaw-cum-Donnington Church of England Primary School  
Love Lane  
Newbury  
RG14 2JG

Dear Ms Devine

### **Requires improvement: monitoring visit to Shaw-cum-Donnington Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 16 March 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 this visit I met with you, an associate school improvement advisor from the West Berkshire local authority and a group of governors including the Chair of Governors. We went on a tour of the school and visited classes in every year group. We reviewed the action plan and you showed me the new policies and recent records of lesson observations and work scrutinies.

### **Main findings**

At the time of the headteacher's appointment in September 2012, areas for improvement in the school had already been identified. Before the previous inspection the school had begun to work on improving teachers' planning and use of information about pupils' progress. The action plan to improve the school clearly focuses on the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. The plan

includes measurable goals and the timescales are sufficiently urgent. However, the action plan needs to be shared with all staff so that they know exactly what their responsibilities are.

The first priority has rightly been to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher has improved the focus of staff meetings, so that teachers have more opportunity to develop their skills. A comprehensive programme of training has been introduced, including the development of a better marking policy. Staff have also had high quality training in use of questioning.

The headteacher is making sure that more responsibility for monitoring and checking teaching is given to staff with leadership roles in the school. There is an established cycle of lesson observations and informal visits to lessons. Teachers are given feedback on the quality of their teaching and if it is less than good, they are provided with coaching and support in order to ensure that their teaching improves.

The school recognises that progress in mathematics needs to be better. Teachers have had specific training to improve their teaching of mathematics, including new approaches to calculation, managing guided group work and ensuring that pupils use a wider range of mathematical vocabulary. A higher level teaching assistant has been appointed to lead and manage a mathematics intervention programme for those pupils who need to catch up. Parents recently attended a very helpful information session about mathematics in order to help them to support their children at home.

The headteacher and senior leaders have reviewed marking and assessment across the school. A new 'closing the gap' marking policy has been introduced to give pupils better feedback and ensure that they correct and improve their work. Early evaluations of marking show that the improved quality of teachers' marking is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Lesson observations have also focused specifically on whether pupils really understand what they are learning and how well they are doing. Pupils of all ages and ability were able to talk well about their own learning and progress.

The headteacher has introduced a termly review of progress for each class in which current results and rates of progress are recorded. The headteacher wants class teachers to be more accountable for the progress of each pupil in their class. The headteacher has also improved the format of reports to parents. Parents will now receive better information about their children's current levels, rates of progress and attitudes to learning.

Since the previous inspection, governors have focused securely on the key areas for improvement. The headteacher says that she challenges governors and that in turn they challenge the school with their questions. Governors have a thorough

understanding of what the school needs to do to be a good school. They appreciate the openness of their relationship with the headteacher and her team and are now more involved in the day-to-day running of the school. They visit lessons and attend relevant training.

The local authority had identified the school as a high priority before the previous inspection and has provided a range of support, including a leadership programme and mentor for the headteacher. The school is part of a mathematics network which has provided good opportunities for sharing good practice. I recommend that this support continues.

School leaders and governors are beginning to take effective action to tackle the areas identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that teachers are continuing to develop their skills in the teaching and assessment of mathematics
- check that teachers are using the new marking and assessment policy consistently, especially when they check learning during lessons and when they mark pupils' work
- continue to develop the skills and expertise of middle and senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and progress
- make sure that the action plan is shared with all staff and that everyone knows what their individual responsibilities are.

HMI will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. A second visit in the autumn term will include a review of the impact of the marking and assessment policy and a meeting with school leaders to evaluate the impact of their work in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**