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4 October 2013

Nicola Parker  
Orchards Church of England Primary School  
Cherry Road  
PE13 3NP

Dear Mrs Parker

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

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- Reduce further the variability in the quality of teaching through regular, subject specific feedback to teachers on how to accelerate pupils' progress in their lessons.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior, subject and phase leaders and the team who support pupils with additional needs. I met pupils, representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I joined you at the gate to welcome children and parents in the morning, attended an assembly and observed the school at work throughout the day both with you and on my own.

## Context

Since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement there have been two new leadership appointments, phase leader for Years 2 and 3 and a subject leader for English. An additional teacher has been appointed to the team of reception class teachers.

## Main findings

Pupils are starting to make better progress especially in the younger classes. Teaching is still variable in quality, but improving. Teachers are starting to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Pupils say they feel more actively involved in lessons and my observations confirm this. Marking is regular but does not consistently encourage pupils to respond to teachers suggestions. Teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on their suggestions for how to improve their work.

Progress still requires improvement overall. There are some improvements for different groups of pupils. More able students feel that the work they are given has the right level of challenge for them most of the time. Additional adults support less able pupils and those who need extra support for a range of complex needs very well. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Attendance is improving. Pupils who need help to manage their behaviour receive very good support from the well-being team and the school has case studies of very successful support for some who have been permanently excluded from other schools.

Leaders are having some notable successes in engaging parents in the life of the school and in supporting them to help their children to learn. The curriculum has a range of additional events that support reading and literacy well.

You have restructured the leadership of the school to provide greater opportunities for all leaders to share in the improvement work. Subject and phase leaders are receiving good training to help them fulfil their responsibilities. The action plan, that the local authority has drawn up for the school is fit for purpose. It would benefit from greater clarity in the role governors will take in monitoring and evaluating progress towards the targets in the plan.

Governors support and challenge the school with increasing confidence. They have benefitted from the support of an advisory governor provided by the local authority. This support is no longer necessary. They have conducted a self-review assisted by an external adviser. They understand the need to ensure they take every opportunity to validate what leaders are saying about progress with first hand evidence.

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 is providing support for the school in a number of ways. These include conducting a teaching and learning review and through the work of literacy and numeracy advisers. The school is also benefitting from links with a number of other successful schools and through involvement in research.

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

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**