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27 January 2014

Miss Fiona Sayers  
Headteacher  
Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School  
Steellands Rise  
Ticehurst  
East Sussex  
TN5 7DH

Dear Miss Sayers

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 November 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:

- Merge the two versions of the school development plan
- Ensure that there are short-term targets in the development plan
- Review support for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Collate information from the monitoring of teaching and learning to provide an overview of each teacher's strengths and areas for development.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the interim deputy headteacher and the English subject leader. I met with four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and records of checks made on the quality of teaching were evaluated.

## **Context**

There have been several changes to staffing since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement. The headteacher and interim deputy headteacher are covering a vacancy in the Year 1/2 class, pending the appointment of a permanent teacher. The process to recruit a permanent deputy headteacher has started. This member of staff will also have responsibility for coordinating support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher and interim deputy headteacher work together as a close team and despite the pressures created by staff vacancies, the improvement noted at the time of the section 5 inspection has continued. The decision not to use temporary 'supply' teachers to cover the vacancy in the Year 1/2 class has ensured that pupils have had continuity of provision and their progress has not suffered.

School leaders and governors have responded positively to the findings of the inspection and have drawn up an additional action plan in response to the areas for development highlighted by the inspection team. This, combined with the previous plan, has created rather an unwieldy document. The plan has long-term targets for attainment and progress, but lacks short-term targets. This means it will be difficult for the governing body to monitor the school's success in improving outcomes for pupils during the year.

There is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and teachers receive appropriate support to develop their skills. Frequent checks on the quality of teaching include visits to lessons and reviews of pupils' work and teachers' planning. At present, school leaders do not collate the information gathered from this wide range of monitoring to provide a clear overview of each teacher's strengths and areas for development. Governors receive information about the outcomes of lesson observations, but do not know enough about other aspects of teachers' practice.

The local authority carried out a review of the work of the governing body and this has led to significant changes to systems and processes. Governors have been proactive in seeking support from other governing bodies and in commissioning

training from the local authority and this is helping them to become more effective in challenging and supporting the headteacher.

School leaders and governors are working hard to find the right staff to fill vacancies. They know that the school's capacity for further rapid improvement will be hampered without a full complement of teachers and senior staff.

HMI will return in the summer term to review the school's progress.

### **External support**

The headteacher and the governing body welcome support and are increasing their links with other schools in the locality.

Most of the support provided by the local authority has been very effective in helping the school to improve. However, the support provided for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not had sufficient impact. This is because the consultant has not provided clear judgements about the effectiveness of the provision and has not followed up on actions agreed with the staff concerned.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for East Sussex and the Diocesan Director of Education for Chichester.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**