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30 January 2014

Frances Parr  
Headteacher  
Barningham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Church Road  
Barningham  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP31 1DD

Dear Mrs Parr

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barningham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 October 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:

- Ensure that when teachers are observed in class, particular attention is paid to whether the lesson is pitched at a sufficiently high level.
- Ensure that governors closely monitor progress towards the challenging targets in the school development plan, and that this monitoring is recorded.

### **Evidence**

During the visit meetings were held with you and the Chair of the Governing Body. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plans were evaluated together with assessment details and records of lesson observations. A total of four lessons were visited to evaluate pupils' learning and written work.

## **Context**

In common with many Suffolk schools, the school is in transition from a three- to a two-tier system. The current Year 5 is the first that the school has had, and they will progress to the first Year 6 next year. No national assessments have yet been undertaken at the end of Key Stage 2.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection the results of Key Stage 1 national tests have become available. These show that pupils enter the school with prior attainment that is above average for their age. Over the past three years they have left Key Stage 1 with attainment that was above or well above average. However in the last year this gap narrowed because pupils made slower progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils in all classes are making faster than expected progress and gaps between the progress of boys and girls are minimal.

You quickly realised that this drop at Key Stage 1 was due to a lack of challenge in lessons, together with some inaccurate assessments that indicated pupils were doing better than they were. Working with the head of an 'outstanding' school and the local authority, you therefore ensured that assessments were closely checked and adjusted where necessary in all year groups. Much work has gone into ensuring that teachers now use accurate assessment data to help plan their work to challenge all pupils and raise the pitch of lessons above that expected for pupils' age. This is done very effectively. For example in Year 5, I observed the teacher ensuring that not only was assessment accurate, but also that all pupils were stretched to an appropriately high level in both mathematics and English. The expectations that teachers have for their pupils have risen.

Your monitoring of teaching is effective. The documentation that you use is simple and clear and gives you an accurate view of teaching. It has an appropriate emphasis on learning. You have demonstrated that examples of lessons not being pitched at a high enough level, especially for the most able, are challenged. For example in science, pupils study and master some topics that would usually be covered in GCSEs.

In class, teachers have mastered the difficulties of teaching mixed year-group classes well. Pupils waste little time and are conscientious learners, usually taking a pride in their work. They quickly develop skills to use the knowledge and understanding that they have gained to tackle new problems.

Your self-assessment of the school is accurate. The targets that you have set the school are ambitious and precise, with clear deadlines. You have a good understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses lie, and of what needs to be done to improve. Targets are used well in the management of teachers'

performance. Teachers are accountable for the success of their pupils. The sharing of best practice between your school and others is well-developed.

Governors are very active in the school and bring many strengths to their role. They have undertaken training on the evaluation of school performance data. However they rarely monitor or report on how well the school is making progress towards the challenging targets that you have set. They have offered too little challenge to the school performance data that you have presented to them

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**

You have used support from the local authority in assessment and Early Years. The local authority has also arranged for the school to partner with an 'outstanding' school so that best practice can be exchanged. This is a very productive partnership.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**