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4 April 2014

Phil Chantler  
Headteacher  
The Churchill School  
Haven Drive  
Hawkinge  
Folkestone  
CT18 7RH

Dear Mr Chantler

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The Churchill School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with: the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team; four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body; and a representative of the local authority. Recent data relating to the progress and attainment of pupils were shared and discussed. The inspector was given a tour of the school and brief visits were made to all classes. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated. The checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children were reviewed.

### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to have serious weaknesses a new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been appointed, to start in the

summer term 2014. A temporary teacher will cover maternity leave in a Year 4 class in the summer term.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

The headteacher and senior leadership team are committed to securing the best possible education for all the pupils in their care. They have rightly set high expectations for each and every pupil: the staff team shares their determination to make the necessary improvements for pupils to meet these.

Teachers are held accountable through robust performance management targets which reflect the school's drive to raise standards for all. The comprehensive system to check regularly how well pupils are doing means any difficulties are identified at an early stage and teachers take appropriate action.

The most recent data show that progress for different groups of pupils is improving in many classes. This is not the case across the school because teaching is not consistently good. Teachers with the best practice are used effectively within the school to coach and support their colleagues.

The school improvement plan is directly linked to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. It follows on from the local authority's plan. The school is addressing key areas in a systematic way. For example, an initiative to use assessment information to plan lessons has been started in mathematics and will next be developed for reading and writing. This is allowing teachers to make changes at a steady pace to ensure they are effective. However the plan is overly complicated. It would benefit from simplifying to enable all staff and governors to see easily exactly what stage has been reached and the next steps for development.

The local authority has provided appropriate support since the inspection in November 2013, including help to develop teaching and learning and a review of governance. Links have been created with a local teaching school alliance which provides useful role models of good practice to improve teaching. Senior leaders work well with other headteachers in the local Vicus Trust to check their judgements about the quality of teaching.

Governors have used messages from the two external reviews of governance effectively to support their work. Recent training has sharpened their approach to help them ask the right questions and they are beginning to hold school leaders more fully to account. They understand the need to challenge how well the school uses additional funding for pupil premium pupils.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**