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8 May 2014

Mrs Sheena Clover  
Headteacher  
Parsons Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
Templewood Road  
Colchester  
CO4 3EZ

Dear Mrs Clover

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

Following my visit to your school on 8 May 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 December 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:

- develop the role of middle leaders in leading teaching and learning and monitoring the impact of the school's work.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, the vice-chair and Chair of the Governing Body and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. I also spoke with subject leaders and the inclusion manager and reviewed the outcomes of monitoring activities. I looked at pupils' work in English and mathematics from across the school, along with information about pupils' progress. I evaluated the school's action plan and accompanied you on a brief visit to all classes.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection you have decided to retire from your post as headteacher, with effect from 31 August 2014. The deputy will also be leaving at the end of the summer term, having recently been appointed to a headteacher post at another school. A new headteacher will be starting at the school in September 2014 and a middle leader from the school has been promoted to the post of deputy headteacher. He will also be taking up this position in September 2014.

## **Main findings**

Working alongside other school leaders you have lost no time in taking action to move the school forward and address the issues identified at the previous inspection. You quickly amended the school improvement plan to focus more sharply on the priorities that were identified. You have concentrated on improving teaching and learning. Professional development needs were identified and relevant training is already taking place, for example a lesson study project is being used to encourage teachers to plan more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. Action has been taken to ensure that when changes are made, expectations are made clear. For example a new calculation policy was developed and shared with staff in a series of staff meetings in order to ensure consistency of practice in this key area.

More regular checks are now being made on the work of the school. In order to reach sound judgements, about the quality of teaching, school leaders consider lesson observations, work scrutiny, teachers' planning and assessment information. This process is helping to reinforce agreed priorities and provide teachers with evaluative feedback about their performance and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement. The involvement of middle leaders in this process is still relatively new and needs to become embedded, so that the school has greater leadership capacity.

You are making very good use of assessment to improve the quality of teaching and learning. When marking work, teachers regularly refer to the steps pupils need to take in order to improve and move on to the next level. The school closely tracks the progress that pupils are making. Senior leaders now meet on a more regular basis with teachers to discuss pupil progress and consider whether additional support is required for pupils who are falling behind. Intervention is provided, where necessary, and the impact on the progress of pupils receiving additional support is reviewed regularly.

School leaders, including governors, have high expectations regarding all aspects of school life. There is a shared expectation that the school will be judged to be good within the next 12 months. The governing body continues to provide effective support and challenge to the school. Governors have high expectations and are determined to do all they can to ensure that the school is judged as good at the next inspection. The governing body now meets each month to review progress against the school's action plan.

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 has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is now providing effective support. A good balance of training, support and challenge is being provided which is helping to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**