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21 July 2014

Mrs R Cunningham and Mrs J Rolfe  
Acting Headteachers  
St Pauls' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
School Lane  
Swanley  
BR8 7PJ

Dear Mrs Cunningham and Mrs Rolfe

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Pauls' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 17 July 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 both made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2014. 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:

- draw up tailored support plans for teachers
- improve classroom learning environments so that displays provide useful prompts for pupils and celebrate pupils' achievement
- provide training for teaching assistants so that they can make a more effective contribution to learning
- include measurable targets for pupils' progress in the school development plan.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I observed teaching in all four classes. Meetings were held with you both and with three representatives of the governing body to discuss the actions

taken since the previous monitoring visit. I also met with the headteacher of the partner school and a representative of the local authority. The school's current improvement plan was evaluated.

## **Context**

The headteacher is due to retire at the end of this term. However, he has not been in school since the end of May. The governing body and local authority have agreed an interim arrangement for the leadership of the school, appointing you both as acting headteachers. Mrs Cunningham works for four days each week and Mrs Rolfe for one day. Mrs Rolfe is also the deputy headteacher at Hextable Primary School.

## **Main findings**

You are taking the right steps to improve the school and the significant concerns that were raised at the previous monitoring visit in March 2014 have all been dealt with. Effective partnership work with Hextable Primary School has made an important contribution to this improvement. School leaders from the partner school have provided practical 'hands-on' support as well as guidance on developing new systems and policies. For example, you have introduced changes to the way information on pupils' progress is recorded and reported, based on formats used at Hextable Primary School. New tracking sheets enable staff to understand exactly how well their pupils are doing and clear reports ensure the governing body is properly informed about pupils' achievement across the school.

All leaders and managers recognise that there is still much work to be done to get to 'good' and you have drawn up a comprehensive development plan with tight deadlines for actions. The plan sets out a coherent programme of improvements for the autumn term. There are targets for improvements in the quality of teaching but no specific, measurable targets for pupils' attainment and progress.

You have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and have made important changes to the way that checks on teaching are carried out. All teachers have been observed since the previous monitoring visit and they have been given detailed feedback on what they need to do to improve. You have begun to provide support for teachers to develop their skills. For example, teachers have had the opportunity to visit the partner school to see colleagues at work. However, evidence from the lessons observed during this monitoring visit confirms that a more structured programme of intensive support is needed for some staff.

The governing body responded swiftly to the findings of the external review of its work and governors feel very positive about the changes that have been made so far. For example, governors report that the appointment of a professional clerk has made a real difference to the quality of meeting minutes. Governors also say they

are better prepared for meetings because they now receive relevant papers at least a day in advance.

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 acted promptly to broker support from an appropriate partner school following the last monitoring visit in March. The beneficial impact of this partnership is plain to see and was commented on by all those who met with me on this visit. A specialist consultant from the local authority has also begun working alongside one teacher and has provided useful advice, but it is too early to see the impact of this support.

You clearly understand the positive contribution that external partnerships can make and are keen to maintain the links with Hextable and develop others with schools in the locality. There are already plans to meet regularly with a group of schools to jointly assess pupils' work and check teachers' judgements of progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Melanie Cox

**Additional Inspector**