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14 October 2014

Mr Andrew Frolish  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
Stonehouse Road  
Hadleigh  
Ipswich  
IP7 5BH

Dear Mr Frolish

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hadleigh**

Following my visit to your school on 13 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 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:

- refine action plans to ensure the available time and skills of the deputy headteacher and English subject leader are focused more directly on improving teaching and achievement.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, two members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and of the diocese to discuss the action taken since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan, performance information and monitoring and evaluation records

were evaluated. We visited every classroom, spoke to pupils about what they were learning and looked at their books.

The Diocese has recently allocated an adviser to work with you, we met together with both the diocesan and the local authority advisers during this inspection.

## **Context**

The school has experienced a challenging year with tragic events that have needed careful and sensitive management. The seconded English subject leader has returned to her position and a new Chair of the Governing Body has been elected. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) has risen to above the national average. About a third of pupils are now supported by this funding.

## **Main findings**

Since my previous monitoring inspection, you have sharpened your action plan and have started using a monitoring calendar to make certain that staff, leaders and governors know how you will check on how well the school is improving. Senior leaders are playing a more prominent role in supporting you to drive improvement however, their roles are still not well enough developed. Assessment information is used more effectively to track pupils' progress and staff understand that they are accountable for the progress of the pupils they teach. Because you have taken time to provide a range of support to children and families in the wider community, improvements to teaching and learning have not been made quickly enough. There is still a need for improvement in the remaining areas of weaker teaching if the school is to be judged good at its next inspection.

In some classes we visited, teaching, feedback given to pupils, and marking of their work, is very strong. Pupils are challenged to succeed and are given highly effective support to help them learn well. As a result progress is accelerating quickly; this is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6. In some other classes, improvement is less rapid and teaching lacks challenge. This means that pupils' progress is still too variable as they move through the school.

In almost all classes, pupils' behaviour was good. They concentrate on the task in hand, discuss their work knowledgeably and try hard to present their work neatly. Where teacher's marking is helpful, pupils respond thoughtfully and as a result learn well.

Governors have provided strong support though a challenging year. The new Chair volunteers in school and is establishing an informed understanding of the school's strengths and of what needs to happen to rapidly improve teaching and

achievement. New structures are being planned to ensure that their monitoring of the school's progress is rigorous and well informed. Governors have ensured they have an accurate understanding of the school's performance through engaging with an external review of its work. They have agreed to resource a pastoral support appointment as a means of enabling leaders to focus more sharply on the priorities for improvement.

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 provided support for the improvement of mathematics which has helped individual teachers develop their practice. A challenge partner has accurately analysed the school's work; her contributions are useful but have not always been acted on sufficiently quickly. The regularity and challenge of visits has been increased. A review of governance is planned to take place this week to identify how governors can improve the levels of support and challenge they offer to senior leaders. You use work with other local schools carefully to validate your own assessment and to help teachers to see how they can improve by observing others.

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

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools