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16 October 2014

Mr John Moynihan  
St Mary's CofE Primary School  
Station Road  
Credenhill  
Hereford  
HR4 7DW

Dear Mr Moynihan

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary's CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 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:

- Ensure as quickly as possible that all year groups currently in Key Stage 2 are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Monitor the progress of more able pupils in each class as closely as that of other groups of pupils.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, four members of the Governing Body including the chair and a representative of the local authority. The school's improvement partner was spoken to on the telephone. The school's action plan was evaluated. Other documents were scrutinised including the latest achievement data analysis, records of staff training

meetings, performance management targets and the latest monitoring report from the school's improvement partner. A small number of pupils' exercise books were scrutinized.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has gone on maternity leave. One teacher in Key Stage 2 is still on long term sickness absence.

## **Main findings**

The school's leaders have responded with determination to address the key recommendations from the last inspection report.

Attainment in the most recent assessments and tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014 increased for the second year running in reading and mathematics and is now in line with the national average for the previous year. Attainment in mathematics fell in 2014 to below the national average for the previous year. The rates of expected or more than expected progress made by pupils in 2014 compared to the previous year was inconsistent from year to year with some year groups increasing and others decreasing particularly in Upper Key Stage 2.

The percentages of pupils reaching the highest possible levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2014 were below with the national average for the previous year. So far this term the school has not yet reintroduced the booster groups for more able pupils.

Teachers' assessments are checked regularly and thoroughly, both within the school and externally to ensure that previous incidences of inaccurate judgements have been eradicated.

On the basis of more accurate baseline information challenging targets have been set for pupils, especially in Year 6. The targets aim to narrow their attainment gap which widened last year when their rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics was not high enough.

A regular cycle of checking rates of pupil progress has been put in place linked to full governing body and pupil progress meetings. Achievement is analysed in each class by pupil groups including by gender, special educational needs, eligibility for free school meals and the significant number of children of service families in the school, but not yet by more able pupils.

Teaching is checked by senior leaders through triangulating evidence in lessons seen with work in pupils' books and achievement data. According to the school's records much of the teaching, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage

1 is now at least good. The school has set itself the target of at least half of all teaching being outstanding by the end of the academic year.

Pupils said they get more time for extended writing in lessons. The afternoon break for older pupils has been stopped and assemblies have been moved to the afternoon to allow more time for literacy in the mornings. Not all pupils are enthusiastic about the additional time for writing, however. Pupils are positive about improvements in marking and confirmed that they are given time at the start of each session to respond to teachers' comments and questions.

Pupils were proud of their topic work on the Egyptians and Mayans which showed clear opportunities for them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils enjoy their work and find most of their lessons challenging and pitched at the right level although some pupils in Key Stage 2 said they found their work in mathematics too easy.

The governing body provides both support and challenge to the school's leaders. Governors with experience of education through their work are able to analyse achievement data and ask challenging questions of schools' leaders. They have put in place plans to carry out visits to lessons and have established governor links for each class.

The school's improvement plan is closely linked to the inspection areas for improvement and identifies clear lines of responsibility for monitoring and evaluation. The intended outcomes for the end of the year are specific but do not contain enough milestones to help governors identify progress in attainment to date.

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 school receives good support and challenge from the local authority and school's improvement partner. External partners are involved by checking the work of the school including planned attendance at pupil progress meetings. Plans are in place to work in partnership with an outstanding local primary school.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**