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8 December 2014

Mrs K Pennicotte-Henrie  
Headteacher  
Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School  
Whichers Gate Road  
Rowland's Castle  
PO9 6BB

Dear Mrs Pennicotte-Henrie

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 December 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 October 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:

- make it clear in the school improvement plan how you will tackle the areas for improvement in leadership and challenge for more able pupils, adding regular milestones so that progress can be checked over time
- improve teachers' subject knowledge so they select relevant activities, which support learning well
- make sure teachers are ambitious for what all pupils can achieve.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection I met with you, the assistant headteacher, other leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority, to

discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I visited classrooms, scrutinised work in pupils' books and evaluated the school improvement plan.

## **Context**

Since the inspection in October, the inclusion co-ordinator has taken maternity leave and you are now managing inclusion.

## **Main findings**

You have taken appropriate action to tackle the areas requiring improvement. The action plan gives some details about how you will improve the school, but it is not clear enough how all the areas identified in the report will be developed, such as leadership and challenge for more able pupils. The milestones are not frequent enough to help governors to check, over time, that the actions are leading to increased pupil progress.

Following training, governors have a better understanding of their role in school development planning and data analysis, and are beginning to timetable specific tasks during the year to accomplish this. With support from the local authority, the recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body and a small group of other governors, are making sure they know what needs to be done to secure rapid improvements.

The collection, presentation and checking of information about progress pupils make is much improved. You and other leaders now know which groups of pupils and which year groups are making good progress. This information is helping you to recognise where further support is required, and you have made sensible decisions about providing additional teaching to accelerate learning where necessary.

Senior leaders are involved in checking teaching and providing appropriate support to teachers where required. However, for some teachers, this is not resulting in improvements because their subject knowledge is not strong enough.

Your higher expectations of what pupils should achieve are helping teachers to be more ambitious for how much progress can be made. The increased regularity of your meetings with individual teachers to discuss pupils' learning is helping this to happen more quickly, but you recognise that there is more to do.

As a result of the steps you have taken to improve presentation, such as the agreed 'non-negotiables' which are published in all pupils' books, teachers and pupils are more aware of work being presented carefully. There is a noticeable improvement in the standards of presentation in some classes. You are aware that there is more to do in terms of raising teachers' expectations of what can be achieved and this has become a part of your regular monitoring and feedback.

The new approach to marking is beginning to be used by all teachers to provide relevant and useful guidance to support pupils' learning. Where teachers have planned time for pupils to respond to comments, they are making more progress. Through your regular checks on books, you know there are inconsistencies and are taking steps to address this.

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 has engaged well with support provided by the advisors from the local authority, who know the school well. Their work with subject leaders has been particularly useful in developing middle leaders' skills. Their planned support is relevant and appropriate to enable leaders at all levels to focus sharply on school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams

**Seconded Inspector**