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26 March 2015

Mrs S Ryall  
Headteacher  
Milldown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
The Milldown  
Blandford Forum  
Dorset  
DT11 7SH

Dear Mrs Ryall

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Milldown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 25 March 2015, 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 December 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.

**Evidence**

During the visit I met with you, middle leaders, teaching assistants and members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the most recent inspection. I also met with a small group of pupil representatives to talk about their work. Together we carried out brief visits to lessons. Documents including school improvement action plans were evaluated.

**Context**

Since the inspection a member of the teaching staff has resigned. A new teacher started in January 2015. Another teacher has gone part-time and as a result, a job-share has been created. A governor ended his term of office in January and another resigned in February 2015. A new Clerk to the Governing Body started in March 2015.

## **Main findings**

Following the inspection you have worked closely with governors to incorporate the recommendations of the inspection report into the school improvement plan. A governors' monitoring committee has been established to enable them to regularly check on the work of the school. You and your middle leaders now regularly share good quality information about the progress and achievement of pupils with governors. As a result, governors say they are now able to hold the school more effectively to account because they are gaining a much clearer understanding of the work of the school.

School leaders have adopted a format for action planning recommended by the local authority. Regular times to check on the work and progress of the school are clearly identified along with those responsible for carrying out actions. You have begun the process of empowering your staff to take more responsibility for improving pupils' achievement. All staff have been kept up-to-date with what the school needs to do to improve. As a result, teachers and support staff who spoke with me say they have a clearer understanding of the school's priorities for improvement and the part they need to play in the process. All staff are confident that the learning needs of pupils are now better provided for because a programme of support focus very specifically on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Middle leaders and managers have become much more analytical of the school's performance data following recent training. This has enabled all in the school to better understand the progress pupils are making and identify where groups or individuals may need additional help. Teachers too are more able to spot patterns and trends in pupils' achievement. For example, recent assessments show boys in Year 2 are not making enough progress in writing. Similarly, you are using this new understanding to improve the progress for the most disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' recent checks on pupils' learning show the progress of the majority is improving as more are on track to achieve their end of year targets. However, this is not the case in all year groups. To this end, middle leaders are supporting teachers in lesson planning to ensure tasks are more closely matched to the needs of all pupils. Senior leaders are more confident in analysing data to track pupils' progress and identify the specific learning needs of pupils, especially middle and higher achievers and pupils entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium.

Staff have already begun to work more closely with parents in order to overcome any barriers to pupils' learning. The parents who met with me said overall they are happy with the progress their children are making in the school. However, parents also expressed their concerns regarding their perceived lack of adequate supervision and engagement of staff with pupils during lunchtimes. A few parents also raised concerns about the inappropriate behaviour of some pupils in Key Stage 1 and the lack of resolve from senior leaders to deal with issues decisively. Parents also said they would like more information about when teachers are absent from school.

Governors regard the inspection as an opportunity for positive change and development. Training from a National Leader of Education for governors on understanding the school's performance data has been successfully completed. They are using their improved knowledge and skills to drive school improvements with greater confidence. For example, governors are working closely with middle leaders to gain a better understanding of their work which is leading to more rigorous accountability and insightful questioning from governors.

### **External support**

The school has used the local diocese to provide training for middle leaders and governors in understanding performance data. A National Leader of Education has recently carried out a review on how the school uses its pupil premium funding. The school has also made contact with an outstanding primary school in Cornwall.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Dorset and as below.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**