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15 December 2016

Jan Digweed  
St Peter's CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Digweed

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

Following my visit to your school on 25 November 2016, 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 March 2016. 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 in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- further clarify the intended outcomes of the school improvement plan with linked timescales to bring about sustainable and substantial school improvement
- complete the pupil premium review and secure swift improvements so that disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are making good progress.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I evaluated the school improvement plan. I met with you and the senior leader responsible for assessment. I also met with the two teaching and learning leaders and a representative from the local authority. Meetings were also

held with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I conducted a telephone call with the local leader in education (LLE) who is supporting the school. Your deputy headteacher and I visited all classes together. We observed pupils learning and spoke with pupils about their work. I also spoke to two parents and analysed the outcomes of the 19 responses from Parent View, the online questionnaire.

## **Context**

Since the school's inspection, you have refurbished an area of the school building to provide a bespoke space for small-group and individual support work to take place. You have also adjusted the senior and middle leadership structure in the school, clarifying roles and responsibilities. You currently have two members of staff on temporary contracts.

## **Main findings**

You acknowledge that the previous inspection was a catalyst that brought about an increased drive to improve outcomes for pupils. You and your leaders agreed with and embraced the areas for improvement. You have galvanised your staff team to retain high staff morale. The drive and commitment of staff and governors for continuing improvement are clear. Your whole-school action plan addresses the issues identified in the previous inspection.

Following the initial two meetings to review the use of pupil premium funding, class teachers are much clearer about which pupils in their class are in receipt of additional government funding. This has made teachers more accountable for the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. In particular, leaders have shifted the expectation so that teachers carry out the additional intervention and support needed. Leaders make regular checks on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and intervene when they have concerns that progress is too slow. Current information shows some encouraging signs that this work is accelerating the progress of lower-ability disadvantaged pupils in particular.

Your recent checks on teaching confirm that there is a greater consistency in the way teachers are providing pupils with work that closely matches their learning needs. In the joint visits to lessons made with the deputy headteacher, I noticed that teachers were making good use of their assessments to support pupils where they had gaps in their understanding. For example, a teacher helped a Year 1 pupil to see where he had not used a capital 'I' consistently in his writing. He quickly and happily responded to improve his work. Work in books shows that teachers' suggestions for improvement are helping pupils to make progress. Teachers' guidance consolidates pupils' learning and helps pupils to develop their skills further.

A new way of teaching reading has had an impressive impact on the standards in reading, particularly in key stage 2. All pupils are reading more often and with

greater understanding. This represents a significant improvement, particularly for boys. The work in books shows that the boys are beginning to apply the knowledge from their reading to their writing. Sentences are better constructed and they are using a broader choice of vocabulary to enhance their sentences. Teachers have also received further training on the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is helping to improve pupils' writing skills. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that there are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge. A number of interventions are in place to enable pupils to catch up. Your leaders are checking the impact of these interventions on pupils' progress.

You are working determinedly to secure a culture of rigorous self-evaluation across the school. All staff have raised their expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving because of the training received following the inspection. Teachers and leaders work closely together to identify any gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. These leaders then carefully monitor the quality of teaching and assessment to ensure that pupils can catch up. This is supporting a greater consistency in teaching and learning across the school. Where discrepancies exist, leaders take decisive action. They provide teachers with the guidance and support necessary to bring about improvements. Moreover, leaders are not complacent. Where progress is obvious, they continue to review the work to ensure there is no slippage.

Your work with the LLE has supported the strengthening of systems in the school. Your deputy headteacher has provided a full programme of training to ensure that the work of senior and middle leaders leads to consistently good progress. Importantly, this work has not been confined to English and mathematics. All subject leaders now have an action plan in place whereby they are supporting and monitoring the quality of teaching in their subjects. Middle leaders say that the new systems and clarity of expectations have enabled them to have greater confidence in their role. The English and mathematics leaders have a particularly clear understanding of the attainment and progress of different groups and individuals in their subjects. Leaders are aware that this work is in its infancy. However, there are encouraging signs that pupils are catching up.

Governors are particularly impressed with the quality of reports you produce. These reports focus on the impact of your actions. They help governors to challenge the work of the school more rigorously. Governors now have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they are demonstrating a growing confidence in holding the school to account.

### **External support**

You have been proactive in seeking advice from colleagues. The local leader of education from Yealmpstone Farm Primary School has provided effective support. Your staff have also benefited from the support of a specialist leader in English as well as an early years Plymouth lead educator, also from Yealmpstone Farm Primary

School. Systems are becoming embedded. You and your staff are developing in confidence and are not reliant on the advice of others. You recognise where improvements are needed and are taking decisive action. The local authority officers are keeping a close eye on the school. A representative has been working closely with the governing body and making at least termly visits to the school to consider the progress made against the areas identified as requiring improvement. Their timely advice is further supporting school improvement. You have found the support from the Teaching School Alliance invaluable, including the guidance and challenge from the pupil premium reviewer.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Exeter, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**