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Mr Michael Larkin
The Headteacher
Christ Church CofE Primary School
Perry Vale
Forest Hill, London
SE23 2NE

Dear Mr Larkin

Ofsted Monitoring of Schools with Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 May 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. In particular, I would like you to pass on my thanks to the pupils and subject managers for the time they gave to talk to me.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection in September 2006, the school was asked to raise standards in English, especially the quality and quantity of pupils' writing; improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially to challenge the most able learners; sharpen up the leadership of subject managers; and improve the curriculum to provide more art, creative activities, design and technology and investigations.

Having considered carefully all the evidence presented by the school and the local authority (LA) I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress on the issues identified at the last inspection. In just two terms the school has made significant strides forward in bringing about the necessary improvements.

After a focused period of reflection and consultation, under the very effective guidance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the staff introduced new measures and programmes to enhance teaching and learning in all subjects, but with a special emphasis on English. The introduction of a new behaviour policy, that all pupils know and appreciate, has had a tremendously beneficial impact. Everyone in the school acknowledges the calm and supportive atmosphere that now exists. Alongside these measures the staff instigated improved procedures to gather information about pupils' performance and to monitor their progress in order to set challenging targets. The new methods of recording this information provide all staff with a clear view of how pupils are progressing and enable all lessons to move pupils forward regardless of their level of ability. These measures have led to significant progress, particularly in English. The progress made by the more able pupils has been especially noteworthy.

The quality of teaching was judged inadequate overall during the inspection in September, although it was variable in quality. All staff have worked extremely hard and with a common purpose to improve their work. The introduction of a new 'teaching for learning' policy and the work of the LA consultants who have given regular input into lessons, have been very successful in raising teachers' expectations. Teachers and support staff have welcomed this professional development. A better lesson-planning system helps all teachers to make learning interesting and challenges pupils to be successful learners; all pupils now have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate their own work. A new marking scheme is being used very well to give clear and immediate pointers to pupils about what they need to do reach higher standards. Again, although all pupils have flourished under this improved guidance, it has been especially valuable in raising the achievement of the more able pupils. Pupils now say that they enjoy their lessons, which are often fun and they know exactly what it is that they need to do next to improve. They know what level they are working at in writing and really want to get better. The quality of work in pupils' books confirms this improved picture of teaching and learning. The regular monitoring by the leadership team and LA link improvement officer shows that there is now no unsatisfactory teaching and it is often good.

The new Foundation Stage coordinator has brought about outstanding improvements in provision in the Nursery since January. The school now has a clear understanding of pupils' skills on entry to the school and is able to build on them. All staff have taken great care to reorganise the curriculum to include a greater emphasis on art, design technology and investigative work. It is clear from the outstanding displays and examples of pupils' work around the school that this has been very successful. The employment of an art and design technology specialist to focus on these aspects during teachers' planning and preparation time has significantly enhanced the curriculum. The school has also brought in sports coaches for a range of physical activities that the pupils clearly appreciate. The impact of subject managers has been greatly enhanced by the input from consultants and the time they now have to work more closely with their colleagues. Through their well-written action plans they are clear about what they need to do to raise standards; for example, through increasing the amount of the pupils' work that is jointly assessed and moderated. Innovative ideas, such as model lessons and focused booster sessions enable pupils to experience different teaching styles.

The school has received good support from the LA which has provided both expertise and support to enable the school to move forwards. The school recognises that there is more to do. However, the effectiveness of the recent changes show that the school, led by the current team, is well placed to continue to improve.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Additional Inspector