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15 May 2007

Mr N Riddiough
The Headteacher
Court-de-Wyck Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mr Riddiough

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help that you gave me when I visited your school on 9 May 2007. I am particularly grateful to the deputy headteacher, the English, science and ICT subject leaders, the chair of governors and your link adviser for the discussions I had with them. Please pass on my thanks to them and to the rest of the staff and the pupils.

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 on 20 September 2006, the school was asked to address three areas for improvement.

- Raise standards in reading, mathematics and science by ensuring that all pupils, particularly the more able, make progress at a consistent rate and achieve as well as they could in all areas.
- Raise standards in ICT by making sure that new equipment is well used and that staff are adequately prepared for teaching all aspects of the subject.
- Redesign the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, enables them to use their key skills and increases their enjoyment in learning.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement. This progress is becoming more rapid as the school's systems for pupil assessment become securely embedded in the work of the school. This, in turn, is leading to teaching and learning which challenges all pupils.

Staff and governors recognise that the judgements of the September 2006 inspection came during a period of instability in the leadership of the school. The inspection enabled them take stock of the effective groundwork laid down by the then acting headteacher and move forward to the next stage of development. The substantive headteacher was appointed in January 2007 and creative induction procedures enabled him to build quickly on developments initiated by his predecessor. He has a clear vision for the school and gives strong leadership to his staff. He has quickly come to know the school well and is accurate in his judgements of its effectiveness. Subject leaders for English, mathematics, science and ICT share his drive to improve standards and are taking an increasingly proactive role in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress. Governors provide good support and challenge to raise achievement.

There has been a clear improvement in achievement in science. Reviews of performance have led to targeting of support. The use of specialist teachers from the local secondary school to work with more able pupils has improved subject knowledge in science. School data indicates that standards for the current Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations. In mathematics, the focus for development has been on mental mathematics and calculation strategies, building on effective support from local authority staff. School data shows that this has improved achievement, but standards remain below national expectations. This improvement needs to be embedded and further progress monitored, especially for the more able. The school has developed a more structured approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils can explain how the scheme guides them in their choice of reading book and they enjoy using the well resourced library. The work on guided reading is developing specific skills which are enhanced through newly established home links. However, there is more work to do with younger pupils to support their comprehension of texts and to stretch the more able.

With the support of the local authority, the school has worked hard to provide improved ICT resources throughout the school. This has resulted in pupils being able to use a range of equipment in the reinstated computer suite and in their own classrooms, including laptop computers and interactive whiteboards. However, the school is aware that further in-service training is required to build on that already undertaken so that teachers can use ICT confidently across the curriculum. The subject leader is also working on assessment in the subject to ensure appropriate challenge in teaching and learning, but the impact of this has yet to be measured.

A great deal of thought and discussion has gone into the redesign of the curriculum. Staff have devoted sufficient preparation time to this project so that, upon implementation, they will have a curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils, uses key skills, and is enjoyable. The school is now in a position where programmed in-service time is available to enable staff to develop a rolling programme of themes which demonstrate coverage of the

National Curriculum subjects, enhanced with first hand learning experiences for the pupils.

The local authority is providing good support and has done so throughout the time that the school was without a substantive headteacher in post. It has been able to support improvement strategies despite changes in leadership and provided an effective induction programme for the newly appointed headteacher. There is clear confidence in his ability to take the school forward. The local authority's statement of action is clear and recognises the existing strengths of the school, whilst outlining appropriate strategies for areas which require development. The provision for the school offers an effective balance of support and challenge.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner
Her Majesty's Inspector