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Mrs Gaynor Goodman
The Headteacher
Churchmead Church of England (VA) School
Priory Way
Datchet
Slough
SL3 9JQ

Dear Mrs Goodman

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 December 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and students who met with 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 May 2007, the school was asked to: raise standards and improve students' progress; improve the consistency and rigour of monitoring; raise the overall quality of teaching to that of the best in the school; improve the ethos by a consistent and rigorous approach to behaviour management; review the viability of the sixth form.

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 and in raising the students' achievement.

Following the last inspection, the decision was taken to suspend sixth form provision and to transfer the small number of students to another school. This was an appropriate decision and has enabled senior leaders to focus more sharply on the remaining areas for improvement.

The 2007 national test and examination results were similar to the previous year. Students made inadequate progress given their starting points and capabilities. The school has revised and redeveloped its system for assessment and student tracking. Students' progress is now measured more frequently. The new system is providing evidence to show that students are beginning to make greater progress. It is also being used to hold middle leaders more accountable for the performance of their

areas. However, a great deal of detailed and sometimes complex data is being produced. Some staff find this confusing and report that it can make the system difficult to use.

Good systems have been developed to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses and are taking rigorous action to secure improvement. As a result, an increasing number of lessons are good and a decreasing number are inadequate. Students report that lessons are becoming more interesting and varied. Work has been done to improve teachers' planning and to establish consistent expectations in all lessons. This is helping to support better planning and lesson delivery, although the new systems and processes are not yet used with sufficient rigour by all staff.

The school has developed much better behaviour management systems. Clearer and higher expectations have been established. Disruptive incidents are dealt with quickly and more consistently. As a result, behaviour has improved significantly and misbehaviour is now rarely a barrier to learning. However, the changes are still very recent and staff report that there is sometimes a lack of clarity about aspects of the new system.

Work is being undertaken to improve monitoring and evaluation across the school. The model for departmental review and evaluation is good. Many reviews include thorough and detailed analysis. Planning across the school is improving, although many plans lack sufficiently sharp targets.

The school has received strong support from the diocese and the local authority. Close liaison and collaboration have ensured that this support is targeted and coordinated. A number of recent appointments to the senior team have increased the school's capacity to improve further. However, the school is currently undertaking a wide range of development and change. As a result, the focus on the key things that the school needs to do to improve is not always sufficiently sharp.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector