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Mrs Angela Morrow
The Headteacher
Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
95 Church Road
Steep
Petersfield
GU32 2DE

Dear Mrs Morrow

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 11 March 2008, 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 children, members of your staff, the chair of governors and the local authority representatives who spoke with me during the day.

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 June 2007, the school was asked to:

- Make significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. Ensure that teachers provide achievable challenges to pupils of all levels of attainment.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides for the progressive development of pupils' skills.
- Ensure that teachers provide clear academic guidance for their pupils through good quality marking of work and by setting precise targets for them to achieve.
- Develop the leadership and management skills of all teachers. In particular, ensure that they are involved in raising standards through the rigorous monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the last inspection, there has been a significant turnover of staff in Key Stage 2. The mixed Year 3 and 4 class and the mixed Year 5 and 6 class both have new teachers. There is also a new classroom assistant. In lessons observed, pupils make good progress. This is because lessons are well structured and supported by

teachers' effective planning. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and they all have suitable learning objectives. Teachers make good use of pupils' assessment information and as a result, activities are practical, exciting and well matched to pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support particular pupils or groups. Pupils' behaviour is good and they have very positive attitudes towards learning. A pupil reflected, 'We have looked at our work since September and we can see how much progress we've made'.

To improve the curriculum, effective frameworks to support the progression of pupils' skills and knowledge are now in place. Lessons are now well matched to pupils' different learning needs. Lesson plans are effective in outlining how they support pupils' progress. Teachers provide clear support for the different ability groups within each class. Pupils are very clear about their targets and what they need to do to make further improvements. There are clear tracking systems in place which effectively identify where pupils are and what their expected rate of progress should be. Pupils in Year 6 know what National Curriculum level they have attained and what their expected level should be when they leave the school. Teachers mark pupils' work well and provide an appropriate balance of praise and constructive comments to help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve.

The good leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the leadership team has ensured that pupils' progress is monitored and evaluated very effectively. There is a clear, whole school approach to tracking pupils. This has been driven by the headteacher and supported well by the recently developed leadership team who have clear responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating achievement. The rigorous monitoring systems now ensure that the school is able to put into place early intervention strategies. As a result, pupils at risk of underachieving are provided with clear support programmes in order to increase their rate of progress. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. A good example is the 'Special Writing Books' which are marked by the teachers and celebrate good progress and indicate how pupils can improve. These books are then sent home to share the information. The governing body is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and now plays an effective and active part in the monitoring of pupils' progress.

The local authority (LA) has an effective action plan and has supported the school with good support, well matched to the school's needs. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and leadership and management have developed the capacity to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. For example, subject inspectors and an advanced skills teacher have been working alongside staff to develop effective teaching strategies. Regular monitoring visits are made to the school by the LA's District manager and school improvement partner to provide effective support for the headteacher and monitor the school's progress.

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

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector