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Ms L Cullum
Headteacher
St Mary's CEVC Junior School
Swann Lane
Long Stratton
Norfolk
NR15 2UY

Dear Ms Cullum,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you very much for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 14th May, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please would you also pass on my thanks to your deputy headteacher, the Chair of Governors and to the School Council for giving up their lunch break to talk with me.

Since the previous inspection the intake profile of your school has changed and attainment on entry is currently in line with other schools nationally. In 2007 the results in English and mathematics in national tests were above average at the end of Year 6. However attainment in science dipped to below national expectations. The school has taken action to try and address this dip in performance. Pupils' progress in English was satisfactory last year however it was weaker in mathematics. The school's data indicates that pupils are making satisfactory progress in mathematics this year.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 30th April – 1st May 2007, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English.
- Ensure that more lessons are taught to a good or better standard.
- Enhance pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy by developing cross-curricular links.
- Develop a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in making the required improvements.

Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection and the rate of pupils' progress is now similar to that of other schools nationally. The school's tracking data indicates that attainment will be higher this year and that progress is also improving. The school has worked very hard to achieve this and the half-termly writing assessments have enabled teachers to identify areas for improvement and any pupils who could be falling behind. The school has made good progress in raising standards in English.

Teaching is now good or better throughout the school. Joint lesson observations were carried out with the headteacher and with deputy headteacher during the inspection. Their judgements were in line with those of the inspector which helped to confirm the accuracy of the school's judgements on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Further examples of lesson monitoring were analysed during the inspection. These give clear judgements on strengths and areas for development and have led to the improvements seen during the inspection visit. The school has made good progress in improving teaching.

Some examples of mathematics and English skills being applied in other subjects were seen during the inspection in lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work. The school recognises that it is still at the early stages of developing this work and has correctly prioritised it in its school improvement plan for next school year.

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has worked hard to improve the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The new deputy headteacher has added considerable skills and expertise to the senior leadership team. Her steer and lead on monitoring teachers' planning has made a good contribution to the improvements in teaching and in English. The rigorous and robust tracking system now in place gives teachers a very clear picture of how well pupils are doing. It also helps inform the senior leadership team by giving a strategic overview of pupil progress. Other ways of using this data are being explored in order to improve standards further. There have been a number of changes to the governing body and under the leadership of the new chair of governors the governors are beginning to offer greater challenge as well as support to the school. Whole staff training for safeguarding is planned for this term.

The school has had good support from the Local Authority in addressing the key issues for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector