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Mrs Anthea Hill
The Headteacher
East Hoathly Church of England Primary School
Church Marks Lane
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Dear Mrs Hill

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 July 2008 with Stephen Long HMI. Thank you for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. Please pass on our appreciation to your chair of governors and to your school development adviser for the time they gave in meeting us during the visit.

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 27 June 2007, the school was asked to:

- improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage so that the activities meet the needs of all children and prepare them better for their future education
- improve the standards in writing by the end of Year 2 by developing basic skills more stringently and systematically.

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

Pupils continue to make good overall progress by the time they leave in Year 6 and reach standards that are above average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 remains better than in Reception to Year 2 because teaching and the curriculum for the older pupils are more consistently effective in meeting the full range of their needs. Pupils at the school are well cared for and their personal development continues to be good. They demonstrate positive attitudes, behave well, and by the time they leave the school they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

There has been some turbulence in staffing since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage teacher left the school in November 2007, with the teaching assistant also leaving a few months later. The headteacher has achieved some success in minimising the impact of these events on pupils' learning and a stable team of two temporary teachers is in place in the Reception/Year 1 class. A new permanent teacher for this class will take up her post in September. The Year 6 teacher took on the role of literacy coordinator at the start of the spring term 2008.

Despite the disruption in staffing for the youngest children, the work of the current teachers in the Reception/Year 1 class, well supported by the headteacher, has resulted in improved, and now satisfactory, provision in the Foundation Stage. The classroom is organised to provide opportunities for children to be more independent in their learning with interactive displays and materials that are easily accessible. The teaching is also promoting children's independence more effectively. For instance, in one lesson observed, children were setting up arrangements for gathering the views of their classmates on favourite items and activities, for example food, pets, sport, prior to individuals moving from table to table to record their preferences.

Planning shows that suitable account is taken of all the required areas of learning. As a result, children are now doing better than those in Reception last year and reaching expected standards in their creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The school's records, classroom observation and samples of children's work indicate that satisfactory progress is being made overall and most children are reaching expected levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year. Communication, language and literacy are the areas of learning where children do least well. While there is evidence of improvement in the development of children's writing skills, achievement continues to lag behind that in reading and the school acknowledges the need to increase the pace of progress.

An appropriate range of strategies has been introduced to improve writing by the end of Year 2, for example a consistent approach to the basic skills of spelling and handwriting, and 'big write' activities where pupils regularly produce extended pieces of work. These strategies have wisely been adopted for all pupils to ensure skills are built progressively. Current assessment information shows that pupils in Year 2 have made satisfactory progress in writing from their starting points this year and are beginning to enjoy writing for different purposes. The standards reached, however, remain below those in reading, reflecting the legacy of weaknesses in past achievement. Fewer pupils than average exceed the expected levels in writing and not all the more able pupils fulfil their potential.

The subject leader for literacy, well supported by the headteacher, is committed to raising standards. She monitors the impact of the initiatives effectively through the analysis of assessment information and the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. However, she has too few opportunities to observe lessons to support her evaluation of the quality of provision. Lessons for Year 2 pupils focus more effectively on the quality of writing, although activities are not always planned well enough to meet the needs of all pupils consistently. Targets are appropriately challenging and pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Pupils receive good feedback on their work from regular and detailed marking, although pupils do not respond sufficiently to the

comments made and mistakes are then repeated. Good steps have been taken to develop writing in other subjects. This is beginning to make an impact but is not linked systematically enough with pupils' literacy targets.

The local authority (LA) is providing good support on a range of issues through the school development adviser, advanced skills teachers, consultants and through training. The impact of provision is monitored well by the school, the LA adviser and the School Improvement Partner and further support is carefully considered as a result.

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

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield
Her Majesty's Inspector