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Mrs Sara Pecheur
The Headteacher
Christ Church CofE Controlled Primary School and Nursery
Claremont Road
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Dear Mrs Pecheur

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 19 March 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass my thanks to your chair of governors and to the Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils who talked to me so enthusiastically about their work and their school.

Since the last inspection in February 2008 there have been considerable changes in staffing. You took up your post in September 2008, the acting deputy headteacher took up her post in January 2009 and of your eight class-based teachers, five are new to the school this academic year. Four of the five are in their first year of teaching. A new substantive deputy headteacher takes up her post after Easter. Staff changes have been a particular challenge for you and the governors. However, inspection evidence indicates that the leadership and management are having a good impact on school improvement.

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 and 21 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve standards and pupils' achievement in writing by raising teachers' and pupils' expectations of the quality of work expected
- improve the achievement of middle and lower ability pupils by ensuring they have sufficient time to consolidate their learning
- ensure that marking consistently provides pupils with a clear understanding of the next steps they need to take to reach their targets.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the points for improvement.

The inspection also looked closely at the achievement and standards of pupils at the school. In 2008, standards fell at Key Stage 1 and were significantly below average. The school has responded very effectively to this and this year's Year 2, whilst currently performing slightly below average, are on track to achieve average standards by the end of the summer term 2009. Standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in English and science but fell in mathematics last year. The school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress in both key stages, including the half termly pupil progress meetings, have focused all staff very effectively on what needs to be done to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can. The good teaching and work in pupils' books seen during the inspection bear out the fact that standards are currently rising. Pupils are achieving well and are making good progress. There is also a very strong work ethic amongst the pupils, and all those I spoke to knew what level they are working at and are determined to improve on this by the end of the summer term. The school's leadership team and governors have responded well to these positive indicators because the school's Key Stage 2 targets have been revised upwards and this has added further and appropriate challenge.

Both teachers and pupils currently have very high expectations for achievement in writing. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'You've got to believe you can do it and you will.' Although the majority of pupils enter the school with English as an additional language, the school does not regard this as a reason to prevent pupils achieving above average standards in writing. Teachers' good subject knowledge, carefully structured lessons, effective use of dialogue through talk partners and in groups alongside sheer enthusiasm have had a good impact on standards because pupils are highly motivated to do their best. Pupils' enjoyment and excitement about learning were evident in all lessons seen during the inspection. Middle and lower achievers are given good support, both by highly trained teaching assistants who are deployed well in lessons and through the effective booster classes run by the deputy headteacher. The pupils say this has helped them to be more confident about their ability to achieve and they have the time they need to fully understand new concepts and consolidate their learning. The school has also introduced pre-tutoring for new topics so that pupils who need additional support with language and learning can be introduced to new vocabulary before they begin the topic in class. The one-to-one tuition recently funded by the national strategies is also being used well to support those pupils eligible.

Teachers' marking has improved since the last inspection particularly in writing. Pupils like the two stars and a wish system as they are clear about what they have done well and how they can improve their work next time. However, this is not used consistently well in all classes or in all subjects, for example in mathematics. The school has recognised more work needs to be done to improve marking further, for example in giving pupils time in lessons to respond to teachers' written feedback and to ensure they understand the teachers' developmental comments. The use of success criteria so that pupils know how to achieve the learning objective of the lesson has been very successful. In the words of one Year 5 pupil, 'Success criteria tell you what to do step by step. They break it down for you!'

The local authority, through the School Improvement Partner, has supported the school well following the last inspection. You told me how you and the governors have benefited from the advice and assistance you have received, particularly through a period of considerable change in staffing.

I found my day in your school most interesting and hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard
Her Majesty's Inspector