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Mrs B Webber
Old Sodbury Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mrs Webber

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools – Old Sodbury Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 December 2009, 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 chair of the governing body, the school improvement partner and the pupils of the school with whom I had discussions.

There have been some changes in the school since the last inspection on 13 November 2008. You took up your appointment as headteacher in January 2009 and there have been a number of changes to the composition of the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 13 November 2008, the school was asked to: improve the consistency of pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in mathematics; implement a rigorous self-evaluation process, making more effective use of available data, so that identified shortcomings in provision or performance are tackled promptly; attend to the welfare, health and safety issues brought to the attention of school leaders.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Standards on entry vary considerably from year to year, reflecting the school's small size, but are broadly average. In previous years pupils made satisfactory progress in their learning and by the end of Year 6 their attainment was broadly average. However, attainment rose in English, mathematics and science in the national tests in 2009. It was above average in mathematics with 6 of the 11 pupils attaining Level



5 and all pupils attaining at least Level 4. Progress in all subjects was good and considerably better than in previous years.

Teaching in the school is good. All four classes were visited during the inspection, three of them during mathematics lessons, demonstrating that the gains made in last year's tests are being sustained. In the best practice teachers used a range of questioning techniques to encourage the pupils to think hard, explore different ways of solving problems and to ensure that their understanding of mathematical concepts and methods was secure. Work was tailored to the needs and ages of the pupils, particularly in classes consisting of more than one age group. Teachers and their assistants provided focused support for those pupils requiring extra help. Pupils spoke appreciatively about their lessons and were particularly enthusiastic about mathematics. Better teaching in the classroom is supported by a more rigorously planned curriculum which uses the local woodland well to enrich learning.

The headteacher and governing body have developed more rigorous monitoring systems, enabling them to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision more accurately and to plan appropriate actions. The governing body is more involved in the life of the school, participating in monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum, underpinned by sound strategic planning. The school has recently introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress, based on the regular collection of assessment data. This is not yet fully embedded but is already providing a clearer indication of the rates of progress made by the students across the curriculum.

The school has been well supported by the school improvement partner and the local authority in these developments. Although the school has successfully responded to the welfare, health and safety issues raised in the last inspection, this visit raised some other concerns because the leaders and governing body are not trained well enough in this area. The detail of the issues was raised with the school and the local authority and urgent action to remedy them is in hand.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector

