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Miss M Cross  
Headteacher  
St Chad's Church of England Primary School  
Gladstone Street  
Winsford  
Cheshire  
CW7 4AT

Dear Miss Cross

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 January, 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Since the last inspection the school has experienced the following contextual change. Pupils were admitted from a local primary school which closed. This increased the proportion of pupils at St Chad's with special educational needs and/or disabilities from below to above average.

As a result of the inspection on 28 and 29 January, 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science
- increase middle managers' responsibilities for their areas to improve pupils' achievement
- ensure that all teaching is consistently challenging, reflecting best practice in the school.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

good progress in making improvements and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Before the last inspection, standards had fallen in assessments and tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The inspection showed that the decline was being halted and it has now been firmly arrested. In 2009, pupils in Year 6 did considerably better than those in 2008. In English, the proportion of pupils

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reaching Level 4 in the National Curriculum went up from below average to average. Within this, standards in reading were above average; in writing, they had improved but remained below average and the school is right to be working hard to strengthen pupils' writing throughout the school. The improvement in mathematics between 2008 and 2009 was considerable, but standards remain below average, and the school is also working hard to secure further improvement. In science, the proportion attaining Level 4 rose considerably and is now above average, reflecting the school's good past track record in this subject. The school provides well for those pupils who are admitted at times other than the beginning of the Reception Year, and more generally for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The progress made by pupils in lessons throughout the school has improved well since the last inspection. Behaviour remains good and it is sometimes outstanding. Pupils are well motivated to learn overall, more in the school's relatively successful areas, such as, reading and science, than in areas needing further development, such as, writing and aspects of mathematics. They respond positively to the broad curriculum provided and are proud of the vivid displays of their work throughout the school in subjects such as art and information and communication technology. Pupils enjoy their time in school and they are very well cared for by the staff. The school has a clear capacity and high ambition to secure further rises in standards and more consistently good progress. It shows this through its own recent efforts and by its intention to continue using the effective and well focused support and training provided by the local authority which has made a significant contribution to recent improvements.

The recent improvement has been well led by the relatively new headteacher, with the strong support of governors and the expertise of the local authority. She has developed the roles of middle leaders, ensuring they have acquired the skills and authority to carry out their managerial roles effectively. The subject leaders spoken to are very clear about their responsibilities and show a good understanding of how effectively their subjects are being taught throughout the school. Each subject has a clear curriculum plan. Subject leaders provide advice on teaching their subjects when requested and they evaluate provision, lead staff discussions on how to improve it, and observe lessons. Overall, they make a significant contribution to the school's procedures for planning and evaluation. Time is now needed for some coordinators to continue to develop to bring their level of influence over their subjects up to the high levels practised by the more experienced coordinators, and to support the school in improving the teaching of writing and aspects of mathematics. With the ongoing and effective support of the headteacher and local authority, they have a clear capacity to continue to improve, and to support further the school's aim to strengthen learning.

The quality of teaching, assessment and learning throughout the school showed considerable improvement since the last inspection. Some lessons had outstanding features, especially in Years 5 and 6. The lessons were planned in detail and carefully implemented. Teachers made good use of time, had high expectations and

ensured that pupils worked briskly throughout lessons. Good classroom management contributed well to the good behaviour and relationships between staff and pupils. Classrooms are well organised and pleasant places in which to learn. Pupils respected and used the good learning resources effectively. Ample evidence was seen of teachers marking pupils' work consistently well throughout the school and, in doing so, showing pupils how to make further progress. Staff provided appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities.

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

Peter Toft  
Her Majesty's Inspector