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Mrs Helen Haynes
Headteacher
St Giles Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
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Dear Mrs Haynes

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 February 2010, for the time you gave to our preliminary meeting and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff and governors that I spoke to.

The school will experience a significant contextual change when you leave to take up the post of headteacher in another school in April 2010.

As a result of the inspection on 13 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve the rate of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6, and particularly for higher attaining pupils in these years
- improve the quality of teaching through lessons that provide the right level of challenge for all pupils and greater opportunities for learning independently
- develop the roles and strengthen the skills of leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
- improve governors' skills in monitoring the work of the school to enable them to better hold the school to account for its performance.

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.

The school has worked effectively to overcome a legacy of underachievement that was reported in the previous inspection and is still evident from the national test results in 2009 for pupils in Year 6. The results show that since the previous inspection attainment has risen at a steady pace in English so that by the end of

September 2009



Year 6 in 2009 it was broadly average, and is currently at this level. Attainment has also risen in mathematics and science, but is still significantly below average. This is because the proportion of more-able pupils who reach the higher level 5 remains too low. Improvements in the quality of teaching show that, presently in Years 5 and 6, more pupils are well placed to attain the higher level. Progress has accelerated rapidly in Years 5 and 6. However, results of the Year 6 national tests in 2009 show that the considerable improvement in pupils' progress was insufficient to overcome the very slow progress they made earlier in Key Stage 2. The pupils' work and school assessment information show that presently in Year 6 the gap continues to narrow between the school's attainment in all subjects and the nationally expected levels. In Year 5 progress is good and attainment is now above that expected nationally in English and mathematics.

The main reason for the improvement in achievement is the much better teaching now evident in Years 5 and 6. Teachers are working effectively to ensure that the large majority of pupils meet the challenging targets set by the school. The curriculum has improved so that lessons are much more interesting and challenging for all groups of pupils than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson all the pupils were working with enthusiasm to solve difficult problems involving decimal numbers. The activities were carefully crafted by the teacher so that work was well pitched to challenge pupils of all abilities. The teaching assistant worked skilfully with the less-able pupils to ensure that not only were they well supported, but also challenged to work independently. The most-able pupils relished the very difficult problems they had to solve. They reported how much they loved their mathematics lessons because of this challenge.

School leaders are now much more effective at holding staff to account for the work done. Leaders have taken advantage of useful support from the local authority to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills. Their better performance has led to a number of important improvements in provision. For example, pupils' writing is better than at the time of the last inspection because of the high quality of individual attention they receive so that they are well aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their work. This has resulted in the broadly average standards that pupils now attain in English. The stronger teaching and support, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are now leading to better outcomes for pupils, demonstrating that the school has a better capacity for improvement than at the time of the previous inspection. The school development plan accurately identifies the right areas for further improvement. However, many of the stated criteria by which to assess the plan's success are not sufficiently precise for the school to judge, accurately, when it has achieved its goals.

Governance, which was judged to be inadequate at the 2008 inspection, is now much stronger. Governors demonstrate a thorough knowledge and insight into the work of the school. They are developing effective procedures to check its work so that they are now well placed to hold school leaders to account and to ensure that school policies are adhered to.

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

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector