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Miss A Cook
Headteacher
Saint Mary's Church of England Primary School
Chapel Lawn Road
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Dear Miss Cook

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 discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils I spoke to and to the Chair of Governors and representative from the local authority who also took time to meet with me.

Since the last inspection a new chair of the governing body has been elected and there is a new Key Stage 1 teacher in place. Your secondment as acting headteacher has now been made a permanent appointment.

As a result of the inspection on 26 February 2008, the school was asked to ensure that all pupils know their targets and understand what to do to improve so that standards and achievement rise; use assessment information to ensure that the curriculum is better matched to all pupils' needs, particularly higher attaining pupils; and improve the capacity of the governing body to hold the school to account. 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.

Pupils join the school at broadly average starting points. After the last inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 1 fell to below the national averages. Standards in are now back on track and improving as a result of changes made in the provision of teaching. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards which are broadly in line with those expected for their age because of good teaching in Key Stage 2. Examination



results are better in mathematics and reading than in writing. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory progress overall in their learning.

The school took swift action to address weaknesses in the governing body. The resulting changes mean that it now takes a more formal approach to its duties, as reflected in the minutes of meetings and the establishment of committees. Governors have been trained in the analysis of data to evaluate pupil performance so that they can carry out their role to hold the school to account more effectively. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well but are at an early stage of involvement in its self evaluation process. Overall, good progress has been made against this area for development.

You and the governors continue to focus on raising standards for higher attaining pupils. Although recent tests and assessments do not yet reflect the actions taken, much has been done to ensure that, in future, more pupils will achieve the highest possible levels of attainment. Wherever possible, the large Key Stage 2 class is divided to enable teaching to be focussed at a narrower range of ages and ability. Teaching assistants are used well to achieve this. Younger pupils are sometimes placed with older ones to give them access to more challenging work. There are good links with the local secondary school to provide additional activities for pupils. The curriculum is enriched well by specialist sport, music and French teaching. Pupils enjoy the after-school mathematics booster class. The school has made satisfactory progress against this area for development. However, learning objectives in lessons are at times too broad to meet the needs of different learners.

Pupils are set challenging targets to aspire to higher levels of attainment. Current tracking of progress indicates that more pupils than in previous years are well placed to achieve this by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils usually know what is expected of them and how they can improve their work. At its best, marking is informative and challenges pupils but it is inconsistent in its quality. As a result, older pupils do not always know their level of attainment or how to reach the next level. The school has made satisfactory progress against this area for development.

Robust safeguarding arrangements are in place to ensure pupils' safety and security. You have worked well with the local authority which has given you good support to provide strong leadership and management in order to bring about an increased capacity to improve for the future.

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

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector