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Mrs Barbara Parfitt  
Interim Headteacher  
Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
High Street South  
Tiffield  
Towcester  
NN12 8AB

Dear Mrs Parfitt

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 7 July 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit. I would be grateful if you would pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils who met me, to the members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors, and the three representatives from the local authority.

For most of the time since the last inspection, the headteacher has been on sick leave. An interim headteacher took up post on 25 January 2010 on a temporary contract.

As a result of the inspection on 18–19 November 2009, the school was asked to:

- improve the capacity for sustained improvement by implementing leadership roles for key subjects and areas of the school's work; establishing strong and productive relationships and effective levels of communication across staff at all levels; ensuring that the governing body takes focused and decisive action to promote effective working practices
- gain consistently good or better teaching and learning
- enable pupils to gain a greater awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures, faiths and traditions in this country and beyond.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Strong action has been taken to restore positive working relationships within the staff community, ably led by the interim headteacher who is bringing clear direction



and purpose to the school's work. Leaders and staff are now pulling together as a team and there is improved communication across the staff at all levels. There is a real commitment shown by all to improve on the areas identified by the last inspection. Particularly noteworthy are the leadership's sharp focus on how well pupils are learning and the implementation of effective strategies to ensure that all achieve their potential. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, is being undertaken by the interim headteacher. The process involves all staff as well so that they have a sense of ownership, and they are increasingly taking the responsibility to adjust their lesson planning to ensure that pupils' progress is secure. The careful tracking of pupils' progress shows that the great majority are now making at least satisfactory and, for many across all year groups, good progress from their starting points. The 2010 unvalidated national test results for the pupils in Year 6 indicate that in English, mathematics and science attainment is higher than in the previous year, with many attaining the higher Level 5. This represents good progress for these pupils.

A scrutiny of pupils' work and the lessons observed during this inspection support the positive improvement evidenced by the school's own monitoring of teaching and learning. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils about their work are improving well. Pupils generally understand their targets and the use of the traffic light system is being better established to enable them to self-assess their progress. Teachers' consistent use of targets set for the pupils is less well established; for example, targets are not routinely referred to when pupils are given tasks. The quality of tasks is stimulating and broadly challenging, although a few pupils say that they still find some of the work undemanding. Increasingly, pupils are encouraged to show greater independence in learning and this is particularly effective in the homework projects which pupils have done recently, linked to countries represented in the football world cup. Pupils speak enthusiastically about such opportunities to undertake investigations and present their work in a variety of ways, appropriately using information and communication technology. Pupils' learning about different cultures and religions is also being enhanced through suitable topics and assemblies. A visit to Christian, Muslim and Sikh places of worship in a nearby city generated much interest and made a good contribution to pupils' understanding about diversity. The setting up of a school council is welcomed by the pupils and it is enabling them to show initiative and to make a useful contribution to their school.

Some work has begun in identifying leadership and management roles for subjects and there is a secure plan in place to ensure that agreed responsibilities are carried out effectively. The governing body is much better informed about pupils' attainment and progress, for example through individual governors' visits to lessons and through reports submitted by external assessors, such as the School Improvement Partner. The involvement of governors in the review of the raising achievement plan also gives them a sense of the progress being made since the last inspection.

The local authority, in partnership with the Diocese, is helping to provide suitable support and challenge. The temporary appointment of the interim headteacher has



secured stability and engendered a unity of purpose among staff. The involvement of advisory consultants in improving teachers' planning and assessment, through coaching and moderating teachers' own assessments, are making a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The effectiveness of the governing body is being strengthened through co-opted membership. However, much remains to be done to secure the school's capacity for sustained improvement over a longer period of time beyond the current temporary arrangements for senior leadership.

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

Dilip Kadodwala  
Her Majesty's Inspector

