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21 November 2016

Mrs Jennie Ratcliff  
Surrey Hills Church of England Primary School  
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Surrey  
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Dear Mrs Ratcliff

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Surrey Hills Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 November 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

I met with you and senior leaders, four governors and two representatives of the local authority. I also spoke with a representative of the diocese on the telephone. With you, I visited classrooms to see pupils learning. Together with senior leaders and the mathematics leader, I looked at pupils' exercise books. I considered a range of documents, including the school development plan, records of checks on teaching and learning and minutes of governors' meetings. I took into account 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

### **Context**

A new assistant headteacher and two teachers started in September. A new teacher joined the school last week to replace a teacher who left in October.

## Main findings

You quickly accepted the findings of the last inspection and adopted a sharper focus to school improvement. You have set high expectations, ensuring that everyone is committed to securing the best outcomes for pupils. Increasingly, pupils are rising to the challenge, identifying their own next steps and celebrating their work on the 'wow walls'. You pay much more careful attention to pupils' progress information. This is enabling you to make the right changes at the right time to raise pupils' achievement further. As a result, the school is improving. Last year, more children left the early years ready for Year 1 than in the past. More pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check than in previous years. Both in key stage 1 and key stage 2 last year, pupils' attainment was similar to or better than the national averages.

Leaders are more confident and skilled. Through close support from the local authority and St Martin's Primary School, senior leaders have increased their abilities and are better able to identify relevant priorities for improvement. The school development plan is ambitious yet rightly targeted to make important changes first. Middle leaders have also benefited from training that has enabled them to understand their roles and increasingly contribute to the school's development. For example, the mathematics leader recently led a 'maths week' to promote problem-solving that included workshops for parents to help them support their children better.

Senior leaders and subject leaders check the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. They provide helpful feedback to teachers that supports them to improve. They follow this feedback up to maximise the impact of their work. Where necessary, you have provided teachers with additional support, drawing on the expertise of the local authority, to ensure that they meet your high standards. Consequently, the quality of teaching has risen. Nevertheless, you are not complacent and know that there is more to do to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.

Teachers have better subject knowledge and higher expectations of pupils. You have provided them with ongoing training to increase their understanding of the range of subjects. This includes checking that their assessments are accurate with colleagues in their own and other schools. Teachers also have a greater understanding of how pupils make progress in the different subjects. They use this to set all pupils, including the most able, increasingly demanding tasks with 'black, blue and red challenges'. In a Year 6 grammar lesson, a pupil chose a red challenge called 'it burns', stating that she enjoys difficult work. Across the school, the most able pupils are currently making similar progress to their classmates and an increasing proportion are exceeding the expectations for their age.

You have made changes to the way that pupils record their work. Pupils have one book for mathematics and one for all other learning. This has enabled teachers to make better links across subjects and set and maintain high standards for pupils' written work. Pupils' books show that they have more opportunities to write at

length and with greater precision across the curriculum. For example, Year 3 pupils recently wrote a newspaper article in history explaining the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. As a result, pupils' work shows that they are making better progress across key stage 2 in writing.

You wasted no time in seeking to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants share your commitment to raise achievement for this group and now know these pupils well. The pupil premium review that took place soon after the inspection noted that you rightly consider the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. The inclusion leader uses her knowledge of these pupils to direct support that more accurately meets their needs. For example, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year made better progress than their classmates because they received extra, individualised teaching. Across the school, teachers are paying closer attention to the disadvantaged pupils so that their rates of progress match those of other pupils in most year groups.

Governors provide greater challenge to senior leaders. They have benefited from training to increase their knowledge and skills, particularly so that they make better use of pupils' outcomes information to check the impact of leaders' work. Through carefully focused visits, governors see for themselves the progress the school is making against the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. For example, the pupil premium governor has checked that teaching assistants have made use of their training and provide more help to disadvantaged pupils. Increasingly, governors set next steps for leaders to secure further improvements.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided considerable effective support to the school. Through the regular 'challenge meetings', the local authority has held senior leaders to account rigorously. This has helped to secure improvements to provision, particularly in leadership, governance, and teaching and learning. The representative from the diocese attends these meetings to check the progress that the school is making. The local authority also brokered support from St Martin's Primary School that senior leaders greatly value as a source of ideas and confidence.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Guildford and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Dulon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**