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8 December 2009

Michaela Long  
Headteacher  
Christ Church C of E Primary School  
Albert Street  
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Dear Mrs Long

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 December 2009 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I was pleased that you and the deputy headteacher were able to observe lessons with me and join the discussions I had with teachers after each lesson. It is clear that the stability of staffing which you are now enjoying for the first time in several years is an important factor in the school's improvement.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 November 2008, the school was asked to:

- make better use of information about the achievements of pupils in order to raise expectations and focus teaching on maximising the learning of all groups
- ensure that teaching and the curriculum are better adapted to meet the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language to improve their rates of progress
- ensure that teaching provides greater challenge to more able pupils so that they achieve as well as they can.

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.

Achievement is satisfactory and improving. The slump in attainment in 2008 has been reversed. The results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 rose considerably in 2009, especially in mathematics. Standards in English remained similar to those of the previous year but did not reflect fully the improvements noted by teachers in their own assessments. In the current Year 6, attainment across all subjects is higher still, with three quarters of the year group on track to reach the



nationally expected Level 4. Around a third of the pupils are expected to exceed this level.

There is growing evidence that the quality of pupils' learning and their progress are good. Most value-added indicators rose convincingly in 2009 and the school's own data show that many pupils are making more than the expected gains within a year. The lessons I observed were characterised by many strong features which enhanced the pupils' experience and fostered their learning. They were encouraged to develop their language skills through frequent opportunities for focused discussion. They were engaged on worthwhile problem-solving tasks and they understood the purpose of the activities. In all classes, pupils applied themselves diligently and enthusiastically. More able pupils are now challenged effectively.

The school has strengthened its capacity to improve on several fronts. Leadership and management are securely established and staff at all levels are confident in their ambitions for the school. Clear expectations about the quality of teaching and learning are reinforced effectively through half-termly monitoring and feedback to teachers. Weaknesses have been tackled resolutely, resulting in a hardworking and motivated team of adults. There is no inadequate teaching and the majority is good. Assessment is used particularly well to match objectives to the needs of different pupils. The senior leadership team has steered developments in this area with striking success. Teachers know precisely what each pupil understands and they incorporate this insight into their lesson planning and teaching. The quality of marking is outstanding because it links directly to relevant learning objectives.

At a strategic level, the school rigorously tracks the pupils' progress and identifies where further support is required. Several remedial programmes for reading and mathematics are operating with a high degree of success in reducing a legacy of underachievement. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the school's approach to teaching and its emphasis on encouraging all pupils to talk confidently about their learning. The school is aware that Pakistani pupils have tended to achieve less well than other groups and it is closely monitoring its various responses to this issue. Rigorous self-evaluation is well established.

Pupils with special educational needs are well served by the school's attention to individuals. As we discussed, it would be helpful to analyse the progress they, and other groups, are making across a whole key stage in addition to the analyses the school already carries out.

The local authority has supported and challenged the school well. School improvement partners have been thorough in their scrutiny of progress and clear in their advice. Governors have also appreciated the support of the Diocese, for instance in arranging training for them.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Hubbleday". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rob Hubbleday  
Her Majesty's Inspector