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Mr G Rushton, Headteacher
The Spalding Parish Church of England Day School
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Dear Mr Rushton

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 15 October 2009 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the governors, parents, members of the local authority and, above all, the pupils who gave their time to talk to me. Since the last inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured. The special educational needs co-ordinator has also become part of the senior leadership team. The percentage of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and number who speak English as an additional language is rising steadily.

As a result of the inspection on 15-16 January 2009, the school was asked to -

- Ensure that it complied fully with the current Government requirements for safeguarding
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils sustain good levels of progress
- Improve the quality of the curriculum at Key Stage 2 to match the learning requirements of the pupils
- Develop and improve the access to the outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Develop and implement actions and processes which lead to improved levels of attendance

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.

The unvalidated teacher assessments for Year 2 in Summer 2009 showed that standards were above average, with writing being well-above average. This

represents good progress from pupils' various starting points. The school's assessment data, targets and the work in children's books indicate that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to attain broadly average standards. This is also good progress from the pupils starting points. In 2009, at the end of Year 6, the unvalidated test results indicate broadly average standards, although the proportion of children attaining the higher than average level 5 in English was lower than expected. Currently in Year 6 pupils are on course to attain broadly average standards, with improvements evident in English. Many of these pupils are making good progress. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is underpinned by the school's strong Christian ethos. Due to the school's concerted efforts attendance has improved significantly and is above average. Even so, there are still a small proportion of persistent absentees. A few parents do not do enough to ensure their children attend as often as they should.

More rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning have identified what needs to be done to bring about improvements. However, many of these innovations are at an early stage and need to become embedded. Although there are early signs of improving pupil progress, this is not sustained through the school. The percentage of good teaching has risen and greater consistency is evident throughout. Teachers set out clearly what they expect pupils to learn. They provide opportunities for all pupils to be involved in lessons as much as possible. Good attention is given to the development of pupils' speaking and listening abilities. The use of strategies, such as 'response partners' are a prominent part of many lessons, generating discussion and interest. Teachers use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' thinking. They also involve pupils in assessing what they have learned and identifying what they need to do to improve further.

A similar picture is evident in terms of the curriculum in Key Stage 2 in that developments go hand in hand with those for teaching and learning. There are opportunities in all subjects for pupils to develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Under the guidance of the assistant headteacher who has responsibility for Key Stage 2, teachers are making better use of opportunities for linking learning across subjects and making it more meaningful. For example, during the visit, pupils in Year 6 made good use of opportunities for extended writing in a personal and social education lesson. Teachers also give careful attention to planning the use of practical activities and teamwork, which pupils enjoy, to make sure everyone is involved fully in the learning.

The accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been re-arranged to ensure that all children have ready access to the outdoor play area for all areas of their learning. Governors and senior managers' plans to improve the quality of this provision further are at an early stage.

The school now fully meets all of the current Government requirements for safeguarding. Checks to ensure adults are suitable to work with children are up to date. Policies to underpin both pupils' safety and Child Protection procedures are in place. All staff, including designated senior managers and governors for Child Protection have received appropriate training. Suitable arrangements to track pupils' progress are in place. Teachers are gaining in confidence when using the information from assessments to match the next steps in learning to the needs of each pupil. The response to any pupil who shows signs of falling behind are prompt and effective. In this respect the special educational needs co-ordinator provides helpful guidance for her colleagues and ensures that programmes are in place to help pupils to catch up.

The headteacher, in partnership with senior leaders and governors, has established a clear focus on school improvement. Actions are in place to address each of the issues identified by the last inspection and to evaluate their impact on pupils' progress. Governors are providing strong support. They are well informed about developments and what needs to be done to maintain the momentum of improvement. The local authority has provided effective support in helping the school to decide how to move forward and in monitoring its progress. The school has embarked on a partnership with a 'Leading Edge' school to share good practice and help to sustain the current momentum.

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

Godfrey Bancroft
Additional Inspector