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25 March 2011

Ms Sarah Bullmore  
The Headteacher  
Christ Church CofE First School  
Feltham Lane  
Frome  
Somerset  
BA11 5AJ

Dear Ms Bullmore

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Christ Church CofE First School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the members of your senior leadership team, your School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Governing Body for meeting with me. The monitoring visit took part during your 'Science Week' and I appreciate the cooperation of your staff in letting me visit lessons and activities linked to this.

Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

As a result of the inspection on 15 and 16 March 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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 transfer to middle school at the end of Year 4 and there is no national comparative data for the attainment of nine-year-olds. However, based on their performance in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, their attainment is well below expectations. There is a discernable improving trend in the current Year 4, especially in reading and mathematics. Current evidence indicates that pupils make faster progress, especially the more able, with the result that achievement is improving. During the monitoring inspection, gifted and talented pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4 worked together successfully on an investigate into 'light and mirrors' and



by the end of the day, had made working kaleidoscopes which they insisted on showing everyone in school, including the inspector. Through much improved tracking of pupils' progress, gaps in performance by different groups of pupils are addressed quickly through successful intervention programmes. For example, in the current Year 3 the significant underachievement of girls, and pupils with summer birthdays, is supported effectively through intensive one-to-one support.

In lessons, pupils' behaviour is good and pupils form very positive relationships with their class teacher and the teaching assistants with whom many work. Pupils show good levels of concentration in working independently, for example in writing stories in Year 4 or in composing tunes using the computer in Year 1.

Teachers' planning shows a much sharper focus on planning learning activities for the differing needs of pupils in each class, especially the more able. Pupils are made aware of what they are expected to achieve by the end of lessons, with the best practice identifying precisely what pupils should learn. Pupils have individual targets in writing and group targets for reading and mathematics. Currently, these are not embedded sufficiently across the school. There is inconsistency in pupils knowing when they were set or what the criteria are for them to be achieved. They are not presented to pupils in a common format to help continuity as they move up through the school. Although targets are not linked to teachers' marking of pupils' work, teachers and teaching assistants remind pupils of their writing targets in lessons and expect pupils to use them.

The senior leadership team is much more rigorous in analysing pupils' progress and performance. The school has a detailed picture of the performance of each year group and of groups of pupils by gender, ability and ethnicity. The results of the assessments are used to identify potential underachievement and to implement intervention strategies to overcome barriers to learning. For some groups of pupils, for example those with summer birthdays, assessments are not frequent enough in order to identify the impact of intervention on raising attainment. Currently, the school does not track the performance of different groups of pupils against similar groups nationally as a measure of its own performance.

Through the School Improvement Partner, the local authority provides effective support for the school, particularly in improving the monitoring of pupils' learning and progress.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis  
**Additional Inspector**



## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010**

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics so that by 2012 these are broadly in line with schools working in similar circumstances by:
  - building on the good start that children are making in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - accelerating the progress of more able pupils
  - raising expectations of pupils' potential to achieve more in lessons.
- Improve pupils' engagement in their learning by:
  - ensuring that they are aware of their targets and of what they need to do to improve
  - making sure that lessons are conducted at a good pace
  - sharing the aims of each lesson so that pupils understand what they should be learning.
- Develop more rigorous systems for checking on the school's effectiveness by implementing sharper analysis of data to check on the performance of different groups through the school.