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16 June 2011

Mrs Sarah Keefe
Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Little Laver Road
Matching Green
Harlow
CM17 0QB

Dear Mrs Keefe

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would also like to thank the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and the pupils to whom I spoke.

As a result of the inspection on 9 December 2009, 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

In 2010, pupils' attainment in both Key Stages 1 and 2 improved considerably on the previous year. Pupils' attainment in all subjects in Key Stage 1 was significantly above the national average, having performed slightly below in the previous two years. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 demonstrated significant improvement after being low in 2009. Data for the summer of 2011 indicate that the improved pupils' performance is set to be maintained. Current data for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage indicate they are achieving age-expected levels of attainment in all areas; this is in line with attainment in 2010.

In lessons seen, pupils were enthusiastic and showed a keen willingness to work independently and in groups. They are encouraged to talk about their work and they share ideas about their learning well. They rose to the challenge in a science lesson to relate their understanding of the water cycle to sustaining the earth's resources. Pupils feel that the level of challenge in their work has increased since the last



inspection and that learning topics are now more interesting. Children in the Reception and Year 1 class contributed well to their lesson. Reception children enjoyed the variety of learning activities available to them and initiated their own learning.

Pupils say they feel safe and well supported by the school. They are supportive of each other, both in the playground and in lessons. They welcome the increased opportunities to participate in the new music curriculum. They have good opportunities to participate and to make a contribution to the life of the school. They welcome the increased opportunity they have to use the field in the winter. The transition programme for pupils in Year 6 is working well. There are good opportunities for pupils to undertake advanced work that prepares them for Year 7.

Teaching is improving across the school. The good use of probing questions by teachers to assess the pace of learning is enabling them to move pupils on quickly in lessons. The use of pupil performance data has given teachers a good understanding of how to pitch lessons correctly and devise appropriate learning materials. Challenging the most able is an area of development, as not all lessons provide these pupils with tasks to move their learning on quickly. The improved use of assessment to identify how well children are achieving in the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in significant improvement in children's progress and attainment. Some good examples of marked work were seen in lessons, giving pupils precise next steps of how to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across the school. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons, especially supporting those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children are greatly benefitting from the improved organisation of the classroom and the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The reorganisation or informal 'zoning' of the classroom together with the themed outdoor area have enabled children to use a more free-flowing environment. Children now have considerably improved opportunities to lead on the planning of lessons to initiate their own learning activities.

Children across the school are well supported in their development and learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Focused parents' meetings are having a good impact in providing the right support, especially for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These meetings also provide further opportunities for parents to regularly access information on their children's progress and to comment on it.

Leaders have clearly identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement in their self-evaluation and are taking appropriate actions to improve outcomes for pupils. Tracking of pupils' progress is thorough. The improvement in children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is due to the new teaching team and the focused training provided for all staff. A significant amount of good work has been undertaken to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school which

turn is having a good impact on improving the quality of lessons. School leaders are increasing their actions to improve achievement of the more-able pupils. All teachers are supported to develop their understanding of teaching and assessing of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Robust external scrutiny has also contributed to the school's accuracy of assessment. Leaders are taking steps to ensure that pupils' use of the field play area is extended in the winter. Members of the governing body are monitoring the work of the school appropriately and are supportive of senior leaders. They are knowledgeable of the school's continued challenges, including that of small cohort sizes, and have improved their knowledge of how well pupils are performing. The local authority's School Improvement Partner provides good scrutiny in all areas of the school's work.

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

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009

- Improve pupils' achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage through:
 - providing additional training for staff involved in teaching reception children
 - enhancing the quality of the outdoor area and children's access to it
 - increasing opportunities for children to initiate their own activities.