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9 February 2011

Mrs Helen Austin  
Headteacher  
St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Byfleet  
Hart Road  
Byfleet  
West Byfleet  
Surrey  
KT14 7NJ

Dear Mrs Austin

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Byfleet**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 February 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Could you also convey my thanks to the pupils I spoke to, the Chair of the Governing Body and the two parent governors and the local authority School Improvement Partner.

A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in September 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 December 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.

**Achievement of pupils at the school**

In 2011, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 fell and was low. The progress that pupils made was inadequate, especially in mathematics. The school's data indicate that pupils are making faster progress in their learning due to improvements made, especially to the curriculum for literacy and the improved use of assessment by teachers. All year groups make good gains in their learning. This has enabled the school to reduce the gap in attainment compared to national expectations.



In lessons seen, pupils enjoyed their learning and made the best progress when they were challenged to do their best and work quickly. There are good opportunities, especially in literacy, to evaluate what they have learnt and to assess the progress made by their peers. Pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Short-term attainment targets are known by pupils, although they are not always sure what National Curriculum level they have attained or are expected to attain. In a good English lesson, pupils worked well in groups to discuss and develop their use of descriptive writing. However, where progress made by pupils was satisfactory, the pace of lessons was pedestrian and lacked the challenge or stimulus required to help pupils make good progress. The challenge given to more able pupils in these lessons is limited.

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching is improving slowly; the majority of lessons seen and the school's own assessment confirm it to be satisfactory. A higher proportion of lessons are good than at the time of inspection. The continued professional development activities have had good impact on raising the level of challenge for pupils in both the type of questions asked by teachers and in the setting of more complex tasks. In the good lesson seen, the pace and challenge were pitched well so that more-able pupils learned well and developed a level of working independently in their tasks. Better use of pupil assessment data enables teachers to use group work effectively to develop pupils' ability to work together and discuss solutions to tasks set. It results in tasks being pitched at the right level, although the level of challenge for the more-able pupils is not always sufficient, especially in satisfactory lessons. In less strong lessons, there are limited opportunities for pupils to work on their own and the lack of stretch in their learning results in slower progress. Pupils have noticed a marked improvement in the level of challenge they are given in their work, especially mathematics and literacy. The themed projects and displays develop successfully their understanding and appreciation of people from other communities around the world. The quality of marked work seen in a literacy lesson was excellent. However, this is not the consistent standard across the school.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour in lessons is generally good. Pupils behave considerately towards each other and to staff. However, a few pupils feel that, on a few occasions, there has been poor behaviour in the playground and some disruptions in lessons. They feel well supported by teachers and other members of staff and that poor behaviour is addressed quickly. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to link with other international communities. The school's 'language day' has developed their understanding of different cultures around the world. Their contacts with a school in Swaziland and 'Project Peru' have provided them with sound opportunities to develop their awareness of what it is like to be a child in another country. The themed project to 'Turn on the Tap' encompasses the subjects of science, geography, physical education and mathematics. It successfully helped pupils reflect on the accessibility



of and the value placed on water in the United Kingdom as compared to other countries. The good work to improve the level of pupils' attendance has had good impact. Pupils' attendance is above average, improving from an average position at the last inspection.

### **The quality of leadership and management of the school**

The sharper action planning and more robust measures to improve teachers' use of assessment and evaluate the quality of teaching have resulted in sound improvements. The rise in pupils' attendance demonstrates good improvement. Attainment is rising in all year groups and the senior leadership's use of assessment data has enabled timely interventions to be implemented to bring about this improvement in pupils' progress. The introduction of many measures to improve the quality of teaching, including learning walks and peer observations, has given school leaders an accurate view of how effective the continued professional development activities have been. The introduction of 'assessing pupils' progress' techniques and increasing the proportion of challenging tasks for pupils have played a good part in raising standards in lessons. However, school leaders are aware that the pace of improvement needs to be quickened to result in the majority of pupils making good progress. The sound changes to the curriculum to promote community cohesion have broadened pupils' experiences of other races and cultures. The result of the re-organisation of the governing body enables members to be better placed to scrutinise the school's work more effectively. Link governors are beginning to review soundly key areas of the school's work including teaching and pupils' outcomes. The continued professional development enables them to take a sharper look at their areas of responsibility. The governing body's scrutiny and involvement in the school's self-evaluation and action-planning have made a good contribution to the accuracy of how the school's performance is assessed. The contribution of the local authority's School Improvement Partner enables the school to have a more realistic view on the progress made against key objectives. However, not enough has been done to support the school in increasing the proportion of good or outstanding teaching.

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 2010**

- Improve teaching so that at least 80% is good, or better, by July 2011 by ensuring staff always:
  - use assessment information to adapt lesson content in response to pupils' differing needs
  - provide challenging tasks that are well paced and pitched at the right level, especially for the more able.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that it:
  - systematically monitors the work of the school
  - checks on pupils' academic outcomes more frequently.
  
- Extend the strategy for promoting community cohesion by:
  - creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from communities around the world
  - ensuring that these are included in planning when linking subjects.