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Mrs Lucy Chambers
Headteacher
Kingsclere Church of England Primary School
Ash Grove
Newbury
RG20 5RE

Dear Mrs Chambers

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Kingsclere Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 2 October 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to members of staff and pupils for their time and welcome.

A number of significant changes have occurred since the last inspection. An interim headteacher and new special educational needs coordinator have been appointed and took up their posts from September 2012. The senior leadership team has been restructured and all staff belong to either a literacy or numeracy team. The curriculum has been reviewed further to increase cross-subject links and opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills. Classes have been reorganised in Key Stage 1 including setting of pupils for lessons on phonics (the sounds that letters make). New procedures have been agreed and introduced for the use of learning objectives, assessment and marking.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 February 2012, 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 is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders have set a clear and ambitious direction of improvements that are being introduced, agreed with staff and implemented at pace. They have quickly created a collaborative ethos and a vision shared by all staff. Staff are enthused by the positive changes that have occurred, especially in the acceleration since September, and say they feel 'rejuvenated and energised'. Pupils recognise the changes and are particularly positive about the clarity of school rules and behaviour expectations. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.

Work seen in lessons, pupils' books and in the school's own assessment information indicates that standards and the rate of progress have accelerated since the last inspection in all age groups. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 in 2012 improved and returned to above the national average. Pupils' achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 has improved as a result of the focused work of senior leaders, support from local authority officers and determination of staff. This has resulted in better quality of teaching, particularly in setting clear learning intentions through the use of WALT (What I am learning today) and WILF (What I am looking for). Teachers have a better understanding of assessment information and how to use this to plan work that better matches the needs of pupils with different abilities in one class. Pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs are making the same improved rate of progress as others because of well-targeted work and support. A wide range of resources and activities are used to support learning. However, expectations for the pace of learning and level of challenge for the more-able and older pupils in the mixed-age classes are not always high enough and some are capable of achieving more. This results in some pupils drifting off task and losing focus at times during lessons.

Work seen in lessons and through discussions with pupils indicates more consistent use of 'two stars and a wish', and NS (next steps) in written feedback. These, together with references to WALT and WILF, are increasingly being used in verbal feedback to help pupils understand how to improve their learning further. Teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons and good partnerships are in place with teachers to ensure all pupils are included and making progress. Older age groups have more opportunities to reflect, respond and re-do work in English and mathematics. In Year 6 mathematics lessons, pupils were expected to check their own work so are starting to more easily identify their own mistakes and rarely repeat them in future work. The challenge for higher-attaining pupils is a strong feature in lessons for older age groups. Pupils of all ages have increasing opportunities to develop and use their literacy and communication skills across the curriculum, reflecting the school's focus. For example, younger pupils enjoy the reading groups and older pupils enjoyed using tricky words and challenging themselves through using alliteration and similes to describe settings for their Greek characters. The use of numeracy skills in other subjects is less well embedded.

The use of assessment information, monitoring and evaluation has been strengthened significantly since the last inspection. Expectations are being clarified and raised quickly for pupils' achievement in all age groups. Teachers are starting to be held more robustly to account for pupils' progress in their class, particularly through the 'class chats' and progress meetings. Leaders have implemented an extensive programme of professional development, including activities led and supported by local authority officers and consultants, and sharing of effective practice. Monitoring activities now have rigour and include specific feedback to teachers with a firm focus on how to accelerate pupils' learning. As a result of these initiatives, progress is accelerating for most pupils and there is more consistently

good teaching across the school. Leaders recognise there is still more to do to challenge the more able in Key Stage 1 and to embed the new initiatives consistently across the school so all pupils make rapid progress.

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose and appropriate strategies are supporting school improvement well. Actions have been adapted well to suit the changing and improving circumstances of the school. Local authority consultants have provided coaching opportunities for teaching and for the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. Officers have worked with senior leaders to moderate lessons and self-evaluation judgements. Senior leaders have modelled good teaching and have been proactive in identifying and using effective practice from within the school.

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

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Raise attainment in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - ensuring accurate data from the monitoring of pupils' work are used promptly to inform teachers' planning so that lessons provide for the learning needs of all pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to reflect on and respond to the marking and feedback in their books so that they can develop a growing sense of responsibility for their learning and improve at a faster rate
 - ensuring that teaching engages pupils in their learning and enables them to become increasingly independent in using skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics across the curriculum.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - introducing more robust monitoring of pupils' learning in Key Stage 1, including even more effective analysis of pupils' progress data to ensure pupils make faster progress
 - ensuring that teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 1, are even more systematically monitored with regular feedback provided to teachers to help them improve pupils' learning and accelerate their progress.