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23 January 2013

Christine Easton  
Headteacher  
St Mary's Island Church of England (Aided) Primary School  
Island Way West  
Chatham  
ME4 3ST

Dear Mrs Easton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of St Mary's Island Church of England (Aided) Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2012.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

#### **Context**

Three new members of staff have joined the school since the previous inspection.

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

The school has made reasonable progress in starting to address the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection. The school's improvement plan

sets a clear agenda and has appropriate priorities. Some minor changes are required to ensure that the plan shows clearly how monitoring of the actions will be carried out. It would also be helpful to show more interim milestones in the plan so that progress can be judged at regular intervals.

The local authority statement of action provides clear and specific actions to support school improvement in all the required areas. The plan meets requirements but would benefit from further refinement to clarify the criteria that are proposed for judging progress on some of the planned actions. The local authority has supported the school well and has arranged for the support of a Local Leader of Education to aid the development of the school's leadership capacity. A deputy headteacher has been seconded from another local school to strengthen the leadership team until a permanent deputy headteacher is recruited. Consultants and advisers have worked closely with the school to help improve teaching and to support senior leaders in implementing the proposed changes.

The governing body is focused on supporting the school to improve rapidly. A group of governors has been established to monitor the work of the school and to judge the effectiveness of the actions being taken to improve teaching and raise standards. Governors are asking challenging questions and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed for staff who have joined the school since the previous inspection.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection. The school currently has capacity to support a maximum of two newly qualified teachers. These appointments could be in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Medway and the Director of Education for the diocese of Rochester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**