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15 October 2014

Mr Gareth Mirams  
Wendover Church of England Junior School  
Wharf Road  
Wendover  
Aylesbury  
HP22 6HF

Dear Mr Mirams

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wendover Church of England Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's action plan. In addition, I scrutinised other school documentation including records of leaders' monitoring activity. I joined you on a tour of the school and visited every year group, taking the opportunity to talk to pupils about their learning.

### **Context**

Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, an officer from Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and one of the school's assistant headteachers, shared the headship for the summer term 2014, on a temporary basis. The new

headteacher made regular and useful visits in the summer term and took up the permanent, substantive post in September.

Since the previous inspection a teacher with responsibility for Year 4 and a temporary teacher, with responsibility for Year 6, have left. A teacher with responsibility for Year 5 has taken leave for one year. A newly qualified teacher now teaches this class. A new class teacher, with responsibility for Year 6, joined in September. One parent governor left at the end of the summer term; a new parent governor joined at the beginning of September.

## **Main findings**

You, your governors and senior leaders have reacted promptly and purposefully to the inspection findings. The improvement plan has clear objectives linked to improvement priorities. You have actively engaged all staff in bringing these priorities to life. Using a very visual approach, all staff actively evaluate the school's progress and make helpful contributions to the 'school's development noticeboard.' This enables all staff to be proactive in bringing improvement priorities to life and keeping them at the forefront of their work. You have quickly and successfully developed a positive, collegiate approach. Consequently, all members of staff contribute well to improving the school quickly, feeling a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

You have appropriately revised performance management systems. In the past, targets have focussed on a small number of pupils making progress. There is now a more helpful emphasis on the quality of teaching linked to the progress of all pupils in the class. Now there are higher expectations and all teachers receive greater support to help them improve their practice and skills, including sharing strengths in practice more widely. Newly qualified teachers are well supported with regular opportunities to observe more experience colleagues. For example, a specialist mathematics teacher works alongside staff, developing their skills and expertise in providing appropriate challenging tasks for the most able pupils. As a result, leaders have successfully created a vibrant and dynamic 'learning hub' for all.

Leaders make regular checks to ensure that changes to the way teachers plan for pupils are implemented consistently. Senior leaders regularly scrutinise pupils' books to check pupils receive helpful feedback. As a result pupils' basic skills, such as spelling, are improving. Teachers receive useful developmental points and leaders check to see if these are being actioned. The results at the end of 2014 show improvement, with pupils attaining well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils now achieve the highest levels, particularly in mathematics.

A new behaviour system has been introduced which focuses more sharply on learning behaviour. All pupils are now expected to 'stay green by demonstrating positive learning behaviour in lessons. Pupils know that 'staying green' includes

listening carefully to instructions and starting tasks quickly. The inspector noticed that despite the limitations of very small classrooms, pupils responded well to teachers' requests. Some pupils are already showing greater independence and resilience and are able to stick at more challenging work, with a positive 'have a go' attitude. Leaders have redefined some basic routines such as how pupils come into school after lunchtime. These changes have been constructive; pupils come into afternoon lessons calmly, in a positive frame of mind and ready to learn.

Senior leaders have started the new school year by ensuring that all leadership roles are clearly defined with clearer lines of accountability. Useful training is planned to develop these roles further. Middle leaders are beginning to support teaching staff, offering useful help and guidance on marking and planning. However, middle leaders are not as involved in measuring the impact of their actions on improving the learning and progress of pupils.

Governors provide useful support to school leaders and are equally ambitious about improving the school as quickly as possible. They make useful visits, attend whole staff training and offer helpful challenge to school leaders.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Buckinghamshire Learning Trust provides very useful support. During the summer term, a local authority officer acted as temporary executive headteacher. This was useful as it ensured the school had a substantive headteacher between the retirement of the previous headteacher at Easter and the arrival of the new headteacher in September. It also provided the new headteacher with a valuable opportunity to work alongside a local authority colleague in advance of taking up post. The local authority officer has continued to provide useful help to the school, now in the capacity of advisor. This continuity of approach has ensured that no time is lost in moving the school forward. As a result, the school has made rapid progress; for example, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The Learning Trust has also brokered useful support for teachers, including from a 'Teaching Excellence Practitioner' who specialises in pupils' learning behaviour.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Buckinghamshire.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**