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18 November 2010

Mr Paul Adnitt
Headteacher
St James' Church of England Primary School
Greenacre Street
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 1ED

Dear Mr Adnitt

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St James' Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 17 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk with me and to the Chair of Governors and staff for their time and courtesy. Since the last inspection there has been a rise in the numbers of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number on roll has declined resulting in a reduction in the number of classes from nine to eight.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 December 2008, 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 and **satisfactory progress** in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2010 represents an increase compared to the previous five years. The improving trend indicates children are achieving broadly average national expectations. The school has improved systems to identify particular groups of vulnerable learners who were not achieving as they might and has introduced timely interventions to secure a better rate of progress. Through effective action planning the school prioritised improving writing and gains can be seen in pupils' attainment levels and the progress they now make.

Attainment in 2010 at the end of Key Stage 1 is disappointing and shows a decline in all subjects. Pupils' attainment is below national expectations in reading, writing and

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mathematics. The school's current data indicate that better progress has been secured through improved provision, although further improvement is required. This is most noticeable for the higher ability pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make at least the progress expected of them due to the effective support they receive. At the last inspection, the school was asked to improve achievement in writing and gains are now evident in both attainment and progress measures.

There is a clear and sharply-focused drive to improve the quality of pupils' learning by developing teachers' skills and awareness of best practice. As a result, the consistency of teaching is improving. There has been a focus on teaching and learning throughout the school and targeted support by the local authority has resulted in better rates of progress by pupils in English and mathematics. In the better lessons pupils make good progress and work is matched to the needs of all learners. There is good pace and challenge and clear expectations lead to good provision and outcomes. Pupils are aware of their targets and know what they need to do to improve. In the less-effective lessons the higher ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Marking of pupils' work affirms the efforts of pupils and in the best examples they are guided on how to improve their work. Teachers are involved in the setting of academic targets for pupils and meetings with the headteacher ensure progress is monitored. Where pupils' progress falls short, intervention plans are quickly put into place.

Improved systems and procedures are in place to track individuals and groups of pupils. The school leaders have a better understanding of pupils who are underachieving and have clear structures in place to address identified weaknesses. Systems for monitoring include a cycle of moderation, pupil progress meetings, lesson observations, planning and book scrutiny as well as an evaluation of pupils' views. Whilst these processes are in place, the school has yet to evaluate, embed and sustain the resulting developments made. Members of the governing body are now better at holding the school to account. The Chair of Governors is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides effective support and challenge. Committees have been developed to ensure governor skills are fully utilised.

Support from the local authority since the last inspection has involved working closely with teaching staff on improving provision. The work of the local authority consultants and advisers has been very well received.

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

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector

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Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2008

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and in Years 3 to 6.
- Increase the proportion of good lessons where the quality of teaching and learning enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- Ensure that the action leaders take to tackle underachievement is more focused and rigorous.