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21 March 2011

Mrs C Boocock  
Headteacher  
High Bentham Community Primary School  
Main Street  
High Bentham  
Lancaster  
Lancashire  
LA2 7JU

Dear Mrs Boocock,

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of High Bentham Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 March 2011 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the representatives of the governing body and the local authority who spoke with me.

As a result of the inspection on 15 and 16 September 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The school's records show that pupils' attainment is improving and the large majority of pupils are working at broadly the level expected for their age. Nevertheless, pockets of underachievement remain, for example, in writing in Year 2. There is more to do to accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school, so that they keep up and do as well as they can by the end of Year 5. The school has introduced more-robust systems for keeping each pupil's progress under regular review and for holding staff responsible for the progress pupils make. These have the potential to support the drive to eradicate underachievement. There are some examples of appealing activities that provide good opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems. Pupils' books and work on display around the school show writing for a range of purposes but improving writing remains a priority for the school.

The attendance rate has improved. The importance of attendance is more to the fore with pupils and parents and carers. The school has taken a more robust line on holidays in term time. Consequently, the attendance figures for this school year to date are higher than those for the same period last year. This is a good improvement.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The teaching seen on this monitoring inspection was mainly of a satisfactory quality and some was good. Staff have benefitted from additional training and support from local authority staff and from sharing their own best practice in-house. The school recognises, however, that a further step up in the teaching is needed to ensure that, across the school, it is consistently of a predominantly good quality. Relationships between staff and pupils were positive in all the lessons observed; displays in classrooms supported pupils' learning; and, for the most part, work was matched at least satisfactorily to the range of pupils' learning needs. The most effective teaching occurred when the teacher quickly captured pupils' interest and moved skilfully from an appealing introduction, enthusing pupils to tackle suitably demanding work with confidence. Some of the teaching was marred by inattention to detail which resulted in a number of pupils either not grasping the main teaching point or not getting enough work done to make progress. The use of marking to set short-term targets for pupils' learning has improved and teachers follow the school's agreed approach consistently.

The local authority has provided effective support for the school. It has planned appropriate actions, including formal reviews of the school's progress, which are clearly focused on tackling the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection. Local authority staff have provided additional training for the school's staff and worked alongside them. They have also supported the introduction of more rigorous tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. The local authority has facilitated joint work with another local school which includes support for developing leadership and management.

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

Pat Kime  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**Annex**  
**The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2010**

- By July 2011, raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that work is closely matched to pupils' needs in whole-class lessons, group and individual work
  - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to solve mathematical problems in interesting and creative ways
  - developing pupils' ability to write extensively and for a variety of purposes
  - sharpening improvement planning to focus more closely on raising attainment.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school and in all subjects so that it is consistently good, by ensuring that:
  - the pace of lessons is always appropriately brisk so that pupils made good or better progress
  - lessons include sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils
  - marking and target-setting consistently inform pupils of their next small steps in learning
  - the impact of these changes on the quality of pupils' learning and progress is closely monitored and actions for further improvement are taken.
  
- By July 2011 improve pupils' attendance to at least the national average by reviewing the effectiveness of current initiatives and improving or extending them where appropriate.