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23 May 2006  
Mr S Whittaker  
St Peter's CE Primary School  
Eaves Lane  
Chorley  
Lancashire  
PR6 0DX

Dear Mr Whittaker

### **OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOL WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I visited your school on 23 May, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided during my visit.

Having considered carefully all the evidence presented by the school and the local authority, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress overall on the issues identified at the last inspection.

As a result of its inspection in September 2005, the school was asked to look at several matters: standards and progress in Key Stage 2, the underachievement of more able pupils, improvement in mathematics, and assessment.

This visit considered the quality of mathematics lessons, the organisation of mathematics in the school, the effectiveness of management intervention to improve standards, and the impact of support by the Local Authority (LA). Discussions were held with yourself and the deputy head teacher (mathematics coordinator). Seven mathematics lessons were seen. Management documentation and LA reports were perused. A half hour telephone conversation was held with the schools' LA adviser.

Senior staff have responded with vigour to the points for improvement identified in the September 2005 inspection report. A wide range of well considered interventions to improve the achievement of groups of pupils and develop staff expertise have been very effective. The school has benefited from extensive high quality support from the LA and consultants.

Of the seven mathematics lessons seen, the great majority were good or better; two were outstanding; none were unsatisfactory. Teaching in mathematics across the school is now good. It is characterised by high expectations and effective provision for different ability groups in the classroom. Pace is good. The more able are properly stretched. There is parity of challenge for pupils of the same age who are in different classrooms. The mathematics coordinator, who was new to the position at the time of the September 2005 inspection, has an excellent appreciation of issues in promoting high standards in the subject in this school. The subject is very well led. It is clear that this good improvement has been facilitated by improved assessment of pupils and well tailored professional development opportunities for staff. Local authority colleagues have been very helpful in their monitoring of progress, advice on development, and in making available staff training.

Since the September 2005 inspection, there has been intervention, from an early juncture, to boost pupils' standards in mathematics and English. There is now routinely a short 'blast' session on specific numeracy skills each day, in addition to the normal numeracy lesson. Though these initiatives encroach a little on the curriculum for the foundation subjects, they are appropriate modifications in the present circumstances, to secure the key life skills of older pupils. Analysis of test outcomes has identified topics that need more teaching emphasis and this information has sharpened teachers' planning. There is every prospect of improved national test results this year in relation to the ability of the cohort of pupils.

Two staff have left to promoted posts and another is currently taking extended statutory leave. These staffing matters have affected upper Key Stage 2. Necessary temporary and permanent staffing arrangements have been handled well.

There has been a rigorous regime of monitoring lessons and evaluation from discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their work. Clear records are kept and evaluation leads to straightforward practical points for improvement. Senior staff, LA advisers and consultants have worked collaboratively on this. The evaluative approach and the helpful professional advice to staff that has ensued have been well received by teachers. They have valued opportunity and encouragement to hone their skills. Improvement is secure. It has been well led and managed by senior staff and staunchly supported by well informed and painstaking assistance from LA staff and consultants.

Yours sincerely,

**Jim Bennetts**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools**