



31 January 2007

Mrs K Benetis  
Headteacher  
High Bank First School and Early Years Unit  
Eighth Avenue  
Liversedge  
West Yorkshire  
WF15 8LD

Dear Mrs Benetis

#### OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 January 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the children and governors for their help.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on June 2006, the school was asked to

- Raise achievement and standards in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4.
- Increase the quantity and consistency of good teaching.
- Raise the level of attendance.
- Extend the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education the school provides.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that, at this time, the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement. The support of the local authority has been well targeted at the school's needs. Specialist staff have helped the school to tackle the issues in its action plan. Staffing has now settled, following substantial changes, with an experienced teacher now taking the Year 3 and 4 class. An extended leadership team has been successfully established, which enthusiastically shares and implements the headteacher's clear vision for improvement.

The core of the school's successful approach to improvement lies in extensive provision to tackle children's language needs. Successful training has equipped

teaching and support staff to quickly and accurately identify pupils' needs. There is a strong team approach that focuses closely on children's learning and there are appropriate strategies to help children to improve. All children are therefore benefiting from a wider range of approaches and those with additional needs are better supported. This is reducing the accumulated past underachievement and is having a significant impact on children's learning in all subjects.

Teachers are more conscious of the need for coherent approaches throughout the school. For example, their good use of agreed techniques to encourage children's speaking and listening skills has improved the consistency of teaching. Their lesson plans identify what children need to learn and they make these aims clear to children. Detailed assessment systems give an accurate picture of children's progress. Regular reviews raise expectations further, as successful provision improves children's standards. Teachers make increasing use of assessment information to match tasks to children's abilities. This process is further aided by the strategy of teaching Years 1 to 4 children in ability groups for English and mathematics. Regular reviews ensure that children are appropriately placed. Well planned intervention tackles any occasions where learning is less successful. Children have a range of targets in English and mathematics and are encouraged to make their own evaluations of how well they have learned. Teachers' marking often helps children to improve their work.

As a result of the above improvements, children's standards of attainment are rising throughout the school. The school's results in the 2006 Year 2 national assessments rose sharply to around the national average, representing good progress for these children. They are now maintaining this rate of progress in Year 3. Year 4 pupils are making similarly good gains, although their past underachievement means that the standards they are reaching remain lower.

Children show good levels of enthusiasm for lessons, which are now more relevant and challenging. As a result, they are keener to attend and behaviour has improved. The school has taken effective action to improve attendance, including clearer expectations and a series of appropriate rewards for classes and individuals. This has lifted attendance well; current figures are around the national average.

Governors have had effective training to increase their skills and they now monitor the school more actively. They have detailed information, for example, on curriculum change and school statistics, with good support to understand the implications. Governors have revised many of their systems to ensure a greater focus on accountability. Many governors are regular visitors into school. Some are linked to aspects of the school's work and have reported back their direct observations to meetings in various forms. This is a helpful start, but reports do not

refer specifically to aspects of the school's improvement plan to aid the evaluation of progress.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Painter  
Additional Inspector