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Mr G Worthy
Bilsborrow John Cross Church of England Primary School
Garstang Road
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Lancashire
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Dear Mr Worthy

Grade 3 Ofsted Monitoring of Bilsborrow John Cross Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I also wish to express my thanks to the chair of governors and the local authority link adviser for agreeing to meet with me.

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 5 April 2006, the school was asked to stabilise its leadership, to raise standards, to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that pupils' work is marked effectively and that accurate assessment is used to predict and plan progress.

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 and in raising the pupils' achievements.

The governing body has worked closely with the local authority to stabilise the leadership of the school. Efforts to appoint a full time substantive headteacher have been unsuccessful. An acting headteacher, with extensive experience, was appointed to run the school on a part time basis from September 2006 until the end of the spring term 2009. He works in partnership with the leading teacher who fulfils the role on the other two days. While this is not the ideal scenario it reflects the difficulties in appointing an experienced headteacher to a small school at this time and is providing the necessary stability to bring about improvement. The governors

are considering all options for the future leadership of the school including a joint appointment with another school.

The acting headteacher has worked with the committed staff to establish a clear vision for improvement. There are now systems for rigorously monitoring achievement and the quality of teaching. Staff are well supported by the governing body. The chair of governors has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development and is determined to bring about improvement. The governing body has undertaken training in self evaluation and with the support of the staff and local authority has drawn up a detailed action plan to address the issues identified by the previous inspection. The implementation of the plan has been monitored rigorously and the school held to account. The progress made has resulted in the school being removed from the list of schools identified by the local authority as requiring special support.

In the assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006 standards were broadly average. The attainment in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 was below the national average and results were particularly low in mathematics. However, given the pupils' starting points achievement was satisfactory. The school's detailed assessment data show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2007 have risen. However, progress is not yet consistent across all year groups and the school is working hard to support some younger pupils who have a history of low achievement. This work is beginning to lead to improvement, but the school is aware that there remains more to be done.

The rigorous monitoring of teaching shows that it is always satisfactory and that much is good. This was confirmed by visits to lessons during the inspection and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Teachers plan thoroughly and evaluate the effectiveness of the planned activities. The detailed analysis of assessment data and pupils' test papers inform planning. Teachers display very good knowledge of their pupils and plan tasks well to meet the range of ages and abilities within each class. They have high expectations and set challenging learning objectives for all pupils. Classroom organisation and the management of pupils are very good. The use of teaching assistants is good and they contribute well to pupils' learning and are particularly effective in supporting those pupils with learning difficulties. The marking of pupils' work is completed regularly and there are useful comments within books to advise pupils on how to improve. These are more widely used in literacy and numeracy than in science. The assessment of pupils' attainment is thorough and challenging targets are set for each pupil.

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

Yours sincerely

Garry Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector