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30 October 2007

Mrs J Porter
The Headteacher
Whitehill Primary School
Sun Lane
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Kent
DA12 5HN

Dear Mrs Porter

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 October 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussion, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my particular thanks to the children and staff who gave up some of their break or lunch time to talk to 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 11 and 12 January 2007, the school was asked to:

- ensure teaching is consistently good or better in all classes so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable
- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by ensuring learning is consistently good or better and meets the needs of all pupils.

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.

Standards are rising and unvalidated results from the 2007 national tests show improvement when compared to the previous year, with significant improvement in writing. However, the school did not achieve its targets.

The school has a secure baseline from which progress can be measured and effective systems for identifying underachievement. Tracking data and inspection evidence support the school's view that around 80% of pupils are making satisfactory or better progress considering their capability and starting points. There is a good range of intervention strategies to support and challenge pupils who are underachieving

and the school can demonstrate success in raising the attainment of older pupils who were achieving below, or well below, the expectation for their ages. Recent improvements in quickly and accurately identifying pupils who are underachieving or at risk of underachievement are enabling teachers to give pupils better targeted support and guidance. This is boosting pupils' confidence but it is too soon to evaluate its impact on achievement.

Since the inspection three teachers have left the school and one has changed role. Two of the recent appointments are newly qualified teachers.

Monitoring of lessons by the senior leadership team, including observations with inspectors, has ensured that the school has an accurate picture of strengths and areas for development. The quality of teaching has improved and most lessons are now good. Assessment information shows that in the past some teachers undervalued pupil attainment and, as a result, expectations were not as high as they should have been and this impeded the pace of improvement. The school had already identified this as an area for further development and teachers are receiving support and training to develop this aspect of their work. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident and willing to explore different approaches to learning. However, in a few lessons the pace and challenge is not sufficiently demanding to stretch the most able.

The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support and challenge. The personnel supporting the school have been changed in order to develop a more productive relationship between the authority and the school. The positive impact of their support has been most noticeable in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector