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13 November 2009

Mrs B Portman  
Headteacher  
Benchill Primary School  
Benchill Road  
Wythenshawe  
Manchester  
M22 8EJ

Dear Mrs Portman

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 November 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 21-22 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise standards in writing, especially for boys
- improve marking
- ensure that lessons provide greater challenge for higher attaining pupils
- improve the attendance of a minority of pupils.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has tackled standards in writing effectively and with a good degree of success. Improvement in this aspect of English is evident all though the school, though some disparities in rates of progress remain between year groups and classes. Attainment is still below average, but it has risen, and the rate at which pupils make progress in their learning has also improved. The Reception children's attainment in early reading and writing skills and their phonic knowledge have improved considerably. This means that there are better foundations for raising attainment in writing higher up the school in the future. Attainment, by the end of Key Stage 1, has improved significantly, particularly so for boys. In Key Stage 2, the results of the Year 6 tests in 2009 showed improvement in English and a narrowing of the gap between boys and girls. Last year's leavers exceeded the school's target and they made broadly average progress in English in Key Stage 2. Improvements in attainment and progress were also seen in mathematics and science where pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was significantly better than average. The school's

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predictions are for a further rise in attainment in English, particularly writing, for the current Year 6. Pupils are gaining confidence as writers and their independent learning skills are developing well. In the lessons seen they worked well in pairs and took a good degree of responsibility for evaluating their own learning.

The quality of teaching has improved. The lessons seen were well-focused, orderly and purposeful. Pupils worked well, often with real determination to achieve, and they generally made good progress. There is now a consistent approach to marking throughout the school and, as a result, pupils have clear guidance about what they have achieved and how they could improve their work. The provision for more-able pupils enables them to attain more highly than the majority of pupils at the school, but few reach above average standards for their age by the end of Key Stage 2.

Attendance has been tackled well and has improved. The improvement in attendance has been particularly marked in the Nursery and this has the potential to set a good pattern for these children for the future. The parent support officer has had a positive impact since being appointed in January 2009. The promotion of attendance has a high profile with pupils in school and with parents, even to the extent of featuring the issue on a local radio station. Good attendance is rewarded regularly. Despite these measures, the school's attendance rate is still below the national average and is a continuing focus for improvement.

The school has built on the good self-evaluation noted at the last inspection. Senior staff keep a very close eye on pupils' progress, their attendance, and the effectiveness of teaching. They take appropriate action to improve matters, for instance, providing well focused interventions for pupils at risk of underachieving and giving helpful advice to teachers. All staff with responsibilities, such as team leaders and subject leaders, are actively involved in the drive for improvement. Consequently, there is a culture of accountability that is balanced with support. The school has benefited from the support provided by the local authority and from the federation arrangements.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime  
Her Majesty's Inspector