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9 March 2011

Mr Garry Ratcliffe  
Headteacher  
Oakfield Community Primary School  
Oakfield Lane  
Dartford  
Kent  
DA1 2SW

Dear Mr Ratcliffe

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Oakfield Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 March 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to all of the pupils, staff and members of the governing body with whom I held discussions.

As a result of the inspection on 2 July 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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

Attainment, as indicated by the 2010 national tests and assessments for pupils in Year 6, was low in mathematics but average in English. School tracking data show that learning and progress are good and continuing to improve quickly and securely. There are no significant variations in the rates of progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others, or by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The work seen in lessons and pupils' books reflects an improving picture, especially in writing. However, the quality of writing in pupils' English books is higher than their recorded work in other subjects, such as science. The school is on track to reach its realistic but challenging targets for English and mathematics in 2011.

The school has taken positive and determined action to raise pupils' academic and personal achievements. The curriculum has been enhanced by a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils'

enjoyment of learning, as seen particularly in their eagerness to become involved in lively and engaging activities, including discussions in English and mathematics, is characteristic of lessons. Pupils say they like coming to school and enjoy making friends and the many activities, which include reading and writing imaginative stories.

Pupils are taught in groups of similar ability. Planning is well matched to pupils' stages of learning, including the more able, and the pace of learning in lessons is good. Just occasionally, introductions are long and pupils do not have enough time to work by themselves. In English, pupils write at length when given the opportunity to work creatively, using a range of descriptive language. Pupils show a good understanding of the difference between the techniques required for taking notes and those needed to prepare a biography. In mathematics, pupils show great satisfaction in exploring ideas and explaining the reasons behind their answers.

The school has implemented a number of measures to improve attendance. These include a breakfast club for those who do not attend often enough, the use of text messaging and phone calls to parents and carers of pupils on the first day of absence. Financial penalties have been issued. With the help of key staff, a substantial number of families have been dissuaded from taking holidays during term time. Consequently, attendance levels have improved and are broadly average.

The school has strengthened its monitoring procedures. The school knows that the quality of teaching and learning is at the heart of improved performance. The push for highly effective teaching and learning is evident in the continual review of classroom practice undertaken by leaders. Particular attention is given to learning and pupils' progress. Information from monitoring is used to guide whole-school training and professional development for staff. The school uses information from marking and assessments to provide pupils with feedback on how well they are learning. This information is used to rearrange learning groups and set curriculum targets, which are shared with the pupils.

The school engages effectively with the local authority and the School Improvement Partner. These successful partnerships have worked effectively to bring about improvements to lesson planning, strategies to improve attendance, and to increase the capacity of leadership at all levels.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009.**

- Raise standards in writing by extending opportunities for pupils to use and develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Ensure that, in all lessons, activities are planned which challenge and extend all pupils, and especially the more able.
- Improve attendance by dissuading parents from taking their children on holiday during term time and by immediately chasing up unexplained absences.
- Focus leaders' monitoring of lessons on pupils' learning and on the progress they are making.