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30 March 2011

Ms Debra Gamson  
Greenfields Community Primary School  
Oxford Road  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 8DF

Dear Ms Gamson

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Discussions with staff, members of the governing body, the pupils and the representative from the local authority were also very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave to talk to me and for the welcome I received.

Since the October 2009 inspection three teachers have joined the school to replace staff who have left. The leadership team has been reduced by staff absence and changes to working hours. New governors have been appointed and the school now has a growing roll. Several pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

As a result of the inspection on 14 October 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 inadequate progress in making improvements, and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment in mathematics and English at Key Stage 2 fell and remains significantly below the national average, with pupils making less than expected progress. Progress in reading is improving, however, as a result of the school's focus on better provision and accurate assessment of reading. Results for Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics improved in 2010 but are significantly below the national average. Progress in lessons is still variable and there are too many gaps in pupils' learning for them to reach expected standards by the time they leave school. Girls



are performing better than boys at both key stages and this is a pattern across the school. Attainment for other groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is similar to that for all pupils. Accelerated progress is required for pupils' key skills to improve and this is not consistently taking place across all classes.

Pupils say that behaviour has improved and they appreciate the many rewards for good behaviour, including 'green sheets' and 'proud to be me' awards. The school deals effectively with rare incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils also say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. Despite this, some pupils do not attend regularly. The school did not reach the local authority attendance target in 2010. There are a range of strategies to improve attendance, including regular parent meetings held by the family liaison officer and a governor. The school is now on track to meet the higher 2011 target.

The quality of teaching has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection to improve outcomes for pupils. Some inadequate teaching remains while some better lessons were observed. The best lessons feature engaging tasks which are well matched to pupils' needs. Enthusiastic teaching and accurate assessment enhance learning in these lessons. For example, older pupils in a numeracy lesson were challenged and supported effectively to complete complex calculations when finding percentages of whole numbers. The school plans to use this good teaching as an example for others to emulate; however, this is not yet taking place. Not enough teaching matches the best that was seen and therefore progress is inconsistent. Some inaccurate assessment leads to lessons which do not appropriately match pupils' needs. In weaker lessons the pace of learning slows because pupils spend too long listening. This makes it difficult for them to maintain concentration and interest. In one lesson this was particularly the case for the boys, who, along with all pupils, require more opportunities for practical, hands-on learning. The low expectations of some teachers mean that activities do not match learners' needs and higher achievers are not sufficiently challenged. During the inspection pupils' misconceptions were not always fully addressed and this too slowed learning.

Teachers' marking has improved. It is more consistently providing useful feedback to pupils and shows them how to improve their work. Other assessment is not consistently accurate, which means the school cannot reliably track the progress of pupils across year groups. The school is addressing this through appropriate training but this has yet to have the required impact.

The curriculum is improving. Many subjects are now taught within a theme so that pupils can see the links in their learning. Pupils say they enjoy the enrichment and extra-curricular activities the school provides, including visits to the local area and beyond as well as visitors into school. Older pupils enjoyed the opportunity to talk to visiting magistrates about their work.



Leaders are clearly focused on improving the school and determined to communicate this to all members of staff. The school's self assessment is broadly accurate. Improvement plans have recently become more focused on achieving better outcomes by improving the quality of teaching and learning. Tighter deadlines for action plans are now in place because leaders recognise that the pace of improvement has been too slow. Senior leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the work of the school. The headteacher is fulfilling this role while the depleted leadership team develops.

The governing body receives regular information from staff on key areas of the school's work but is not consistently bench marking achievement against national standards or routinely reviewing independent data. The child protection policy has not been updated and is not immediately available to parents and carers. Safeguarding records are not routinely and accurately checked.

The school has received substantial support from the local authority. This has recently become more focused on improving the school's leadership capacity and there are now useful links with leading headteachers. The impact of the local authority's support and the school's own efforts have yet to sufficiently address the areas of improvement from the previous inspection.

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

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise the achievement of pupils and the consistency of teaching by:
  - all leaders developing their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
  - leading improvements and taking more responsibility for ensuring success.
  
- Accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - developing teachers' marking so pupils understand what to do next to improve their work
  - improve teachers' use of assessment to ensure that lessons always challenge and engage pupils well
  - improve the level of attendance to reach the local authority target by 2010 by working more closely and effectively with those parents who find it difficult to send their children to school regularly.