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Miss Dawn Foster  
Headteacher  
Greenside Primary School  
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Greenside  
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Tyne and Wear  
NE40 4AX

Dear Miss Foster

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Greenside Primary School

### Introduction

Following my visit with Karen Ling, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 June 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2006.

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.

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including seven lessons and two assemblies, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the school council, the chair of governors and a member of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.

### Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection established staff have returned and two new teachers have been appointed. The current staff will also start the autumn term; the first time staffing has been stable for several years.

## Achievement and standards

At the time of the visit in January 2007, there had been inadequate progress in raising standards overall and the school did not have a sufficiently accurate system to assess pupils' standards and progress.

There has been an improvement since the previous monitoring inspection visit and progress in these areas is now satisfactory. Whilst standards remain generally well below the average in Key Stage 2, the progress pupils are making at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is now satisfactory.

Led well by the headteacher, the school has responded very effectively to the need to have a reliable system of assessment. Pupils' work and progress are now assessed and tracked comprehensively and regularly. The assessment of pupils' standards is moderated internally and externally to ensure its reliability. Teachers are now well informed about what pupils are achieving and the progress they are making, and they use this information to guide their teaching. Pupils and parents and carers are also informed regularly about the standards attained and the progress made. A system setting challenging targets, shared with pupils and parents and carers, is also in place and pupils are aware of their targets. These developments in assessment and in sharing information are a significant step forward in assisting the school in its work to raise standards.

The overall progress pupils are making has improved since the previous monitoring inspection visit; they are now making satisfactory progress. However, the low standards many pupils are attaining in Key Stage 2 in particular remain a cause of concern for the school.

Attainment in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Judged by the quality of pupils' written work, lesson observations and teacher assessments, standards are broadly average. The system for monitoring the standard of work and the progress pupils make is rigorously applied by staff. Staff plan lessons which meet individual needs closely, although at times the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

The school now has a well informed view of the standards of individual pupils and of classes and key stages overall and is using this well to direct its resource to intervene to raise standards. The impact of this is evident in progress in Key Stage 2, which has improved and is now generally satisfactory. Nevertheless the standards many pupils attain remain below or well below what is expected. Many pupils in all classes in Key Stage 2 are reading and writing at a standard which is well below what is expected. In mathematics pupils are also now making satisfactory progress overall but many pupils' attainment is well below what is expected. The progress of the different groups of pupils - those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the average and higher attaining pupils - is satisfactory.

The school is helping to ensure satisfactory progress for pupils and in the longer term is positioning its work effectively to raise standards, by the introduction of its well designed system of assessment and use of the information it provides, and in its effort to improve the overall quality of teaching.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006

- Raise standards in all subjects – satisfactory progress

#### Personal development and well-being

The school has introduced a new approach to rewarding good behaviour and this is understood by pupils and they are responding to it well. The attitudes of pupils are positive to their learning; they enjoy their lessons and behaviour is consistently very good. The behaviour of pupils around the school is orderly; they are sensitive to others, and courteous. The school council has an active role and representatives take on responsibilities in a mature fashion. They speak positively about the improvements made within the school. They feel the standard of their work is better because lessons are more challenging. Attendance remains at close to the national average and is satisfactory; there have been very few fixed-term exclusions.

#### Quality of provision

At the previous monitoring inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall. The need was to raise its overall quality to be mainly good in order to raise standards. Teaching and learning have improved and are now predominantly good. The good lessons were well planned, met the needs of pupils well and held their interest. An area to develop in these good lessons is to take more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology. Teachers themselves used technology such as interactive whiteboards effectively to help pupils learn. The weaker elements in lessons were occasionally insufficiently high expectations of the full range of pupils, and a lack of helpful guidance for pupils to check the quality of their work. The use of assessment has developed well and teachers have access to a wide range of information which they use effectively to guide pupils' work, and pupils have curricular targets; these developments have helped learning to improve. Pupils now need to be reminded of their original targets more regularly to help them raise the standard of their work. Teachers' marking is usually commendably comprehensive. To help them to improve, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to respond to the marking. The significant challenge in teaching and learning - to raise standards which are very low for many pupils - means that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

The school has enhanced its provision in the curriculum by introducing sessions for guided reading and mental mathematics to improve basic skills. There is also a range of extra-curricular clubs which are led by staff and volunteers, with good participation by pupils.

## Leadership and management

At the time of the previous monitoring inspection visit the headteacher had just taken up her appointment. She is giving the school good leadership and management. She knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and has energetically tackled important areas to bring about improvement. There is a need to formalise the system of self-evaluation and ensure more staff are involved in the process, and this is due to begin shortly. The headteacher has led the introduction of an assessment system, which should help the school to continue to improve. Assisted by the governors and the local authority (LA), she has also led well in improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. The monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out in conjunction with the LA. Appropriately, it is planned that the headteacher should take the lead in this area.

The middle management of the school has been strengthened by a recent teaching appointment, which includes management responsibility. The new teacher has led the development of a consistent approach to behaviour, which has had an impact on improving the school. The headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and the new teacher with responsibility are now working strategically as a team. The acting deputy headteacher has made a worthwhile contribution to the school's improvement in her class teaching and the leadership role in numeracy. She will return to her school at the end of this term.

A significant area which remains to be developed, and is planned for the autumn term, when staffing will permit it, is to establish leadership in all curriculum areas, including literacy. This will be an important management development in helping the school to make progress on raising standards.

The budget of the school is now balanced. It has also been expanded by a range of other funding, including from the LA to help staffing. The extra funding has been targeted well, for example in providing intervention and support to help targeted pupils to catch up.

The governing body is developing its role well. It has continued to tackle staffing matters effectively, and this has helped in raising the overall standard of teaching and learning to being mainly good. It has begun its gathering of first-hand evidence of the work of the school to aid its knowledge and to help improvement. The governors recognise there is a need to more consistent in the form of their reports on their visits and to be more evaluative. Nevertheless, some of the visits and reports have added usefully to the school's improvement.

There is a need now to ensure that progress on the areas for improvement is kept explicitly to the fore in the agenda at governors' meetings. The governing body is due to conclude its training programme with work on self-evaluation and this is

helpful because they should also be involved in the school's forthcoming updating of its view of itself and its progress and what still needs to improve.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2006

- Establish clear and effective leadership at all levels to raise standards and improve the quality of educational provision- satisfactory progress
- Develop the skills of the new governing body so they can monitor the work of the school effectively, set a clear and achievable plan for improvement and hold all staff accountable for standards – good progress

External support

The LA has provided the school with very good support. The extra funding and the expertise it gives have helped the school to improve. The link adviser in her role as school improvement partner has provided continuous and comprehensive support which is valued and appreciated. The support from strategy consultants has also had an effective impact on teaching and learning, especially through the rigorous analyses of pupils' performance in assessment events, shared with teachers in meetings, and used by them consequently to guide the learning of pupils individually. The priorities and timescales set out in the improvement plans are being met. There is also a thoughtful approach to ensure that the LA support will continue, but the school will demonstrate its growing self-sufficiency by taking the lead in several areas.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed

Priorities for further improvement

- These remain those identified in the inspection of September 2006 and in the previous monitoring letter of January 2007. In addition priority should be given to establishing the leadership of curriculum areas across the school, to help the drive to raise standards.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Group Director Learning and Children and Director of Children's Services for Gateshead.

Yours sincerely

Peter Harris  
H M Inspector