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19 March 2008

Mrs N Frost
Greenfield Primary School and Early Years Centre
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Dear Mrs Frost

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 18 March 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to the pupils and the representative of the local authority (LA) with whom I met.

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 25 and 26 June 2007, the school was asked to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science, improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning and ensure that assessment information is used more effectively so that all pupils are challenged in their learning. The school was also asked to ensure that the senior management team increased its impact on the quality of school improvement.

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.

The results of the most recent statutory assessments which became available shortly after the previous inspection showed that overall standards in Key Stage 2 rose strongly. Results in science at the expected Level 4 rose from 43% to 67%. There was also a strong improvement in results in this subject at the higher Level 5. Standards in mathematics also improved at Level 4. However, results in English declined sharply at Level 4 and were very low. Following analysis of these results, the school identified weaknesses in pupils' writing. Training has taken place to strengthen teachers' skills in teaching writing. Consequently, pupils have greater opportunities in literacy lessons to write at length in different genres and for different audiences. Teachers helpfully model writing for pupils. Learners are supported in developing their skills by word-rich learning environments and by new, individual

targets for writing. While pupils confirmed that there are more opportunities to write at length in science, the school does not yet provide enough opportunities for learners to apply and consolidate their new writing skills in the foundation subjects. As most pupils speak English as an additional language, appropriate strategies have been introduced to develop their speaking and listening skills, such as greater opportunities for role play. An initiative to promote pupils' discussion and thinking skills ('talk partners') has been introduced successfully to most classes. A meeting has also been held with governors and consultants from the LA to review and plan how writing, speaking and listening strategies can be further developed. A series of revision lessons, designed to accelerate and reinforce learning in Year 6, has been introduced with the support of the LA. Training in appropriate strategies for pupils in this year group has also been provided for some staff. The school has also focused strongly on strengthening pupils' number skills in mathematics and a calculations policy is used more consistently. Resources have also been purchased for science. Inspection evidence and data provided by the school suggest that results at Key Stage 2 are set to rise.

Seven lessons were sampled during the monitoring inspection and this confirms the school's view that the quality of teaching and learning is improving and becoming more consistent. A teaching and learning policy has been agreed. Information detailing the National Curriculum levels of work expected of pupils has been distributed to staff. Pupils' work and teachers' plans are monitored regularly by key subject managers and useful written feedback is given to staff. Consequently, planning is more detailed and takes greater account of pupils' different needs. Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled. Staff have attended an extensive range of training courses but information from these is not always fed back to relevant staff. One teacher has observed good practice in teaching at another school. The deputy headteacher has modelled good teaching and provided coaching for some staff. There is room for the school to provide more opportunities for staff to observe good practice in teaching both inside the school and in other settings. Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher and the LA have carried out a set of joint observations of teaching. A series of informal 'drop-ins' to lessons have taken place more recently which is followed up by verbal feedback. The informality of this approach means that there is scope for greater rigor in how the school monitors teaching and learning. In turn, this would better inform the school's overall view of the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The school has made good progress in how it uses assessment information. An assessment timetable is in place and assessment is regularly addressed in staff meetings. Systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics have been extended and plans exist to record pupils' progress in science. The progress made by boys and girls is also now tracked specifically, as is the progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language in developing language skills. As a result, the school has a clearer picture of where underachievement lies. Assessment information has informed the deployment of additional adults, how teaching groups are organised and the setting of appropriately challenging whole-school targets. It has also been well used to inform regular meetings between teachers and the senior leadership team. The scope of these 'progress meetings' has been usefully broadened so that the achievement of all

pupils in each class is analysed. This process has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils, including the more able, can achieve. Useful training has also been provided for teachers in how to write individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This has made staff more aware of how to meet these pupils' needs. The marking of pupils' work is positive and comments are helpful. Staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils know the levels they are working at and the targets they are aiming for by the end of the year. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work but there are some inconsistencies in how this is applied in classes. The school has recognised that it needs to be more systematic in ensuring that pupils are informed of the steps they should take to improve their work. Recent developments in assessment could usefully be collated into a revised assessment policy.

The leadership team has been expanded to include leaders of all key stages and is focused on the need to raise standards and pupils' achievement. Job descriptions have been drawn up for new team members and apt staffing arrangements ensure continuity when a team member leaves the school. The good use of data and participation by all team members in 'progress meetings' have successfully increased the level of challenge for teachers and strengthened senior leaders' understanding of the school's development needs. Action plans have been drawn up for the development of the core subjects although not all identify clearly the whole-school targets they are working towards. Appropriate use has been made of LA consultants for training and of another school's expertise in issues concerning pupils who speak English as an additional language. Useful steps have been taken to involve parents more in their children's education. For example, parents of pupils in several year groups have been made aware of the National Curriculum levels their children are working at and towards. Plans exist to appoint a member of staff who will further develop parental links. Consequently, the leadership team is taking greater ownership of the school's improvement agenda.

The LA has provided good support for the school since the previous inspection. A range of consultants have assisted subject managers and senior leaders. During the unavoidable absence of the headteacher, strong support was provided by the LA for the acting headteacher so that the school's drive for improvement could continue unabated.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy
Her Majesty's Inspector