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30 November 2011

Mr Robertson  
Headteacher  
Great Orton Primary School  
Great Orton  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA5 6NA

Dear Mr Robertson

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Great Orton Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 16 November 2010, 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 at the end of Year 6 in 2011 was very low. In the national tests in English, one pupil achieved the higher Level 5, but no others achieved the expected level or above. Pupils made inadequate progress in both English and mathematics given their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. The cohort of pupils who sat the national tests was small and, of the five pupils who did so, two had joined the school at the beginning of Year 6. An analysis of the data for each of the pupils demonstrates that there was underachievement both for pupils who were present throughout Key Stage 2 and for those who joined the school later. The data show that progress was slow for all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The picture in Key Stage 1 is more encouraging. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2011 improved in both reading and writing. Standards in mathematics improved slightly but remained below average. No pupils have gained the higher Level 3 in reading, writing or mathematics in the last two years.

In lessons the pace of learning is not rapid enough. Teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, is not sharply focused enough on what pupils of different ages and abilities need to learn and how that will be achieved. Although pupils generally behave well and are cooperative, those working without direct adult supervision do not achieve enough in the time available.

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Work to improve the quality and frequency of assessments has resulted in more data about pupils' progress being collected and some use is made of this in lesson planning. However, the school tracking system does not provide a complete picture of pupils' progress as they move through the school. While the school assessment information is helping to identify pupils who are not reaching age-related expectations, there is a lack of clarity about rates of progress taking into account starting points, especially for pupils who join the school other than at the normal time.

Specific literacy targets which are reviewed regularly are evident in pupils' books, but these are not having enough impact on outcomes. Although improving this year, the volume of written work in older pupils' English books for the last academic year was limited. Targets are also set in relation to reading but little progress has been made since the previous inspection in extending target setting to mathematics. Targets in books seen related only to times tables.

In classes of mixed ages and abilities, during periods where whole-class teaching occurs the teaching does not always meet the full range of needs. Younger or less-able pupils struggle with aspects of the work at times, while older or more-able pupils have little to extend their learning. Although different independent work is set for pupils of different ages and abilities, Key Stage 2 pupils spend too long on tasks that do not move learning on fast enough. Monitoring of progress in lessons is not sufficiently astute at picking up pupils who need help or who are not making good use of their time. There is not enough challenge, especially for the more-able pupils. Few pupils know the levels they are working at or their target levels, although many could recall a few of their specific targets in writing.

The small outdoor area for reception children has been improved with a new floor surface in the covered area and some additional facilities, including a garden. There are some opportunities for children to choose their own activities both indoors and outdoors during the day, but children are expected to make these choices early in the day. During the inspection, children enjoyed an adult-directed activity outdoors, enthusiastically matching initial letters and illustrations.

Some steps have been taken to extend pupils' understanding of others from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Britain and the wider world. Pupils recalled with interest a visit to a local Buddhist temple, but struggled to recall many other examples. School leaders have not evaluated this work.

Leaders have acknowledged the significance of the poor results of the 2011 national tests. Overall, the pace of change since the previous inspection has been too slow and lacked sufficient rigour. More recently a new raising achievement plan has been developed with a much clearer focus on attainment and rates of progress, especially in Key Stage 2. It is too early to judge its effectiveness. The governing body is providing both challenge and support to the school.

School leaders have well advanced plans to increase the number of classes to three, which will produce smaller classes and reduce the range of ages in each class. New teaching appointments have been made in preparation for this. This restructuring will also reduce the time the headteacher spends teaching, providing more time for management responsibilities.

Following the 2011 results, the local authority has increased the level of support it provides to the school and the adviser is working with staff to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 and so accelerate pupils' progress.

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,

Ruth James  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010.**

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - extending the use of individual target-setting into reading and mathematics so pupils know what they need to do to improve their work
  - further improve the quality of assessment and use this information to track pupils' progress more closely
  - ensuring all lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils of all ages have sufficient opportunities to learn independently.
- Improve provision for reception children by:
  - improving the quality of the outdoor learning area
  - enabling children to chose more frequently outdoors activities which help them to develop.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to engage with others from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Britain and the wider world
  - evaluate the impact of this work.