



15 December 2017

Dear parents/carers,

### Ofsted 2017

We are very pleased that we are now able to provide you with a copy of the report that we have recently received for publication from Ofsted following the inspection that took place on 20-21 June. You will also find a copy of it on the school's website.

Whilst an overall effectiveness judgement is always provided, the school is judged in five categories namely:-

- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management;
- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment;
- Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare;
- Outcomes for Pupils; and
- Early Years Provision.

You may recall that at the school's last inspection in November 2011 the school's overall effectiveness judgement was 'Outstanding' – this was under a different inspection framework to the one that schools are now judged by as Ofsted continually refines and updates the standards by which it judges schools. **The school has now been graded as 'Good' in all categories with an overall effectiveness judgement of 'Good'.**

We are delighted with the wonderful comments in what we believe is a very positive report and in particular that Ofsted have acknowledged that "School leaders and governors have very successfully changed the school from a first school to a primary school" and that they have commented upon the "thought and consideration" that has gone into the provision for Years 5 and 6 pupils. We are particularly pleased that the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is deemed "outstanding". The report talks at length about how happy, confident and keen to learn your children are and I know that staff and governors could not be prouder of them.

As you are aware, there have been many changes in education over the last few years including major changes to the national curriculum; changes to the assessment systems; changes to the SATs exams; and changes to the way in which those pupils with special educational needs are assessed. We believe that Greenway staff have managed these changes very well whilst at the same time transitioning from a first to a primary school and that the school's overall assessment of 'Good' is one of which the whole school community can be justifiably proud. We are very pleased that Ofsted have indicated that they are confident that with one or two minor tweaks, of which we are fully aware, Greenway will meet all the criteria to be judged 'Outstanding' once again very soon.

## **Why the delay?**

We thought it important to explain to you the reasons for the delay in finalising and publishing the report.

### **Our first inspection in June**

You will recall that our initial inspection (known as a S8 inspection) took place on 20 June 2017. It was conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors ('HMI') known as the Lead HMI. At her request, and as anticipated by us bearing in mind the very many changes that had taken place since November 2011, our inspection was extended into a second day (known as a S.5 inspection) and other Ofsted inspectors joined the Lead HMI for that purpose. At the end of the inspection, the Lead HMI held a meeting with governors (including the Headteacher) – as she is required to do - in which she reported back key findings and gave her provisional judgement on a confidential basis pending various quality assurance checks being undertaken and the report being published. It is fair to say that neither the Head or any of those governors present at that feedback session recognised elements of the school that the Lead HMI described in that meeting.

Once the inspection team had left it became very clear that there was a real possibility that there had been misunderstandings by some or all of the inspection team of those policies and procedures under which the school operates *and* that the inspection should very possibly be deemed incomplete for reasons set out within Ofsted protocols. On this basis the Headteacher and Governing Body took the decision to raise a challenge around the inspection through lodging a formal complaint with Ofsted.

### **Making a complaint**

Ofsted's complaints procedure does not provide for the investigation of a complaint prior to the publication of a report. Ofsted's advice was therefore that we should allow the Lead HMI's draft report to progress through their standard internal quality assurance process to publication and *then* to submit our complaint (within 10 days of publication) for consideration. An assumption is made by Ofsted that their own internal quality assurance process will always resolve all issues; there is no separate provision – and indeed their complaints process expressly excludes it - for substantive challenge by a school if it does not agree with Ofsted's own review and moderation. We felt this to be very unfair - a view that was upheld by the High Court in the case of *Durand Academy Trust\** in the summer.

It was therefore with some trepidation and no clear indication about how this might be received, that the Headteacher and governors took the decision and delivered (within 10 days of the inspection date) a complaint to Ofsted.

### **Quality Assurance Process**

Ofsted did not consider the matter during the summer holiday period and therefore we had to wait until the beginning of September to find out that a number of changes had been made to the report. Whilst we were pleased that changes were made to the report during the quality assurance process it was clear that very little account, if any, seemed to have been taken of the information and evidence provided within the complaint.

### **Exceptional circumstances**

Having been given 24 hours to undertake a factual accuracy check of the report in the normal way (after which the report was to be published) a further successful challenge was made by the Headteacher and me to Ofsted on the basis that there were 'exceptional circumstances' under their own criteria such that (very unusually) the complaint made by the school should in fact be fully considered prior to publication of the report. A further 10 days was given to provide a revised complaint which was duly submitted.



### **Complaint investigation findings**

On 10 November 2017 Ofsted *finally* confirmed that, following consideration of the revised complaint, the inspection was deemed to be ‘incomplete’ requiring them to return to the school to seek additional evidence. Arrangements were made for a further visit under Ofsted’s rarely applied protocol for gathering further evidence. That visit took place on 15 November - it was carried out by 2 new senior inspectors (one of whom was an HMI) and was very strictly limited. It included further interviews with a number of governors and staff and discussion with pupils. Following this visit additional amendments have been made to the report.

### **Where we are now**

Following further quality assurance, we are pleased that we are now able to publish the report. We do have some concerns about the manner in which the complaint lodged by us was handled and we are therefore pursuing this with Ofsted.

We wish to commend the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team in particular for dealing with this process in circumstances where Katharine Ellwood supported by her team have managed to continue to effectively lead the school in providing what we firmly believe to be an outstanding education for your children and to committing fully to Greenway’s transition to academy status within the Berkhamsted Educational Trust.

We therefore hope that you will join us in warmly congratulating staff (and your children) on all that is so very positive in the Ofsted inspection report, while continuing to work in partnership with us as we set out to demonstrate that we remain an outstanding school.

Yours sincerely,

**Elizabeth O’Reilly MBE**  
**Chair of Governors**

\*[2017] EWHC 2097 (Admin)

