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9 June 2011

Mrs A Pell  
Headteacher  
Hawbush Primary School  
Hawbush Road  
Brierley Hill  
DY5 3NH

Dear Mrs Pell

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Hawbush Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 June 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, Chair of the Governing Body, governors and local authority representative for taking the time to talk to me. It was particularly helpful to spend part of the day with you observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and analysing assessment information.

Since the school was inspected in November 2010, the acting deputy headteacher has been appointed permanently to this post. The school is currently undergoing major building work.

As a result of the inspection on 4 and 5 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders have implemented a range of strategies to tackle weaknesses in attainment and achievement across the school. A number of support strategies have continued since the last inspection in order to accelerate pupils' progress, such as Every Child a Reader, Every Child a Writer, a communication, language and literacy development project and one-to-one tuition. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and the latest school data indicates that attainment is broadly in line with that expected for pupils' ages. The school has refined its assessment system so that teachers can assess pupils' work with much greater accuracy. Teachers use this information effectively to plan their lessons and ensure that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged. In most year groups, the very large majority of pupils are making

satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is slower in Years 2 and 5 due to previous inconsistencies in staffing and these pupils' legacy of past underachievement. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. However, the school is aware that more work remains to be done to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils make accelerated progress in mathematics, particularly in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 in order to catch up on ground lost through previous underachievement.

Children join the Nursery with skills that are well below the expected levels in key areas such as early reading, writing and mathematical development. They make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some children now start Key Stage 1 with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for this age. This represents an improved picture since the school was last inspected. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make similar progress to their peers. The school carefully tracks the progress of different groups of pupils. The latest data indicates that girls and boys are now making satisfactory progress from their starting points. Girls in the Early Years Foundation Stage generally make better progress than boys.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Staff have received tailored support through coaching, mentoring, professional development and from local authority consultants to improve their practice. The latest evaluation of the school's work undertaken by the local authority indicates that just over half of all lessons observed were judged to be good and the remainder satisfactory. During the inspection, lessons sampled were judged to be satisfactory overall.

Lessons are focused on clear learning objectives with activities suitably matched to the needs of the pupils. In the best lessons observed, the pace of learning was brisk and teachers engaged pupils fully in their learning. For example, pupils in a Year 1 mathematics lessons thoroughly enjoyed solving problems about capacity and investigating the differences between standard and non-standard units. Teachers helpfully model key skills in mathematics lessons and pupils are given regular opportunities to apply these skills across the curriculum, such as the recent World Maths Day activities. These were enjoyed by pupils and by their parents and carers. On occasion, teachers talk too much in lessons, and this limits pupils' opportunities to work independently for a sustained period of time. Work is regularly marked and teachers provide useful guidance to help pupils improve their work.

Assessment is used increasingly effectively to set and track reading, writing and mathematics targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Targets are written in child-friendly language and are reviewed every six weeks. Pupils report that they enjoy the challenge of meeting their targets and discussing their progress with teachers.

Leadership and management have been strengthened since the last inspection. As a result, the school has made good progress in addressing this area for improvement. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has brought additional skills and expertise that are well matched to the needs of the school. Middle leaders make a positive contribution to school improvement. A robust monitoring and evaluation plan is in place and outcomes are routinely shared with the governing body. The Chair of the Governing Body has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body school improvement sub-committee, is now attended by all governors and meets monthly to discuss school improvement issues. The school has a robust action plan for improvement and this is used regularly by the governing body and school leaders to monitor progress. The headteacher provides steadfast and dedicated leadership that is improving outcomes for pupils.

The revised local authority statement of action is fit for purpose. It is being closely followed by local authority officers who are working with the school and has made a good contribution to improving the quality of education at Hawbush. Staff report that the quality of support received from local authority consultants has been good.

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

Marian Harker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies**, the post-inspection letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – except for academies
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:  
[CausingConcern.schools@dcf.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.schools@dcf.gov.uk) )
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The local Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation

**The letters should also be copied electronically to:**

each member of the inspection team,

**A copy with editing marked up should be forwarded to the:**

Lead inspector

## Annex

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement in mathematics throughout the school by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to practical, investigative work
  - providing greater challenge in order to improve pupils' problem-solving and skills in independent working.
  
- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better throughout the school by:
  - making better use of assessment information to provide work that accurately matches individual pupils' needs and abilities
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in order to eliminate the underachievement of girls and more-able pupils
  - ensuring marking helps pupils to know how to improve their work
  - providing greater opportunities for pupils to practice literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects.
  
- Improve the rigour of monitoring and evaluation of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, by:
  - strengthening the role of middle managers
  - developing a monitoring structure that enables leaders and governors to measure the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning with greater accuracy.