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Ms Anne Wilson  
Headteacher  
Talavera Infant School  
Gun Hill  
Aldershot  
Hampshire  
GU11 1RG

Dear Ms Wilson

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Talavera Infant School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 January 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the teachers who gave up some of their lunch break to speak to me.

Two members of staff, including the assistant headteacher, left the school at the end of the summer term 2010. Three newly qualified teachers joined at the start of this academic year, and a deputy headteacher took up post at the beginning of this term. In addition, there has been some turnover among support staff. Many of the teachers are in the first few years of their career.

As a result of the inspection on 18 and 19 May 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 inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Although the pace of improvement has accelerated in recent months, the school is not in the position that it should be at this point. The turnover of staff has been a factor in slowing improvement. More critically, there has been the lack of leadership capacity which has affected the school's ability to drive improvement from within.

Steps have been taken to secure the necessary foundations for improvement. Procedures for assessment and the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress have been strengthened. The information provides a clear overview of the performance of individual pupils and groups and forms the basis for discussions between senior

leaders and teachers, but this process is not securely embedded. By comparing samples of work, teachers have developed a common understanding of National Curriculum levels and their expectations have been raised. The information which teachers hold is more accurate, providing a starting point from which progress can be measured. Useful links with a successful local school have helped teachers reflect on their practice and develop their subject knowledge and skills. They are keen to improve their practice and have readily accepted the need for change. They plan lessons in detail and mark pupils' work thoroughly. They have set suitably challenging targets for pupils in writing and mathematics, based on their knowledge of current levels of attainment. Pupils talk knowledgeably about their targets and how they might reach them.

Overall, however, there has been insufficient improvement in the quality of teaching. There is still some teaching that is inadequate and not enough that is good. Observations during this inspection highlighted weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge, the organisation of lessons and in planning for progression in learning. Lesson plans showed what teachers intended pupils to learn and they made this clear to the pupils. However, these learning intentions were sometimes very broad and did not indicate exactly what the pupils would understand by the end of the lesson. This makes judging successful learning difficult. The school has not met its target for the proportion of satisfactory and better teaching. As a consequence, the pupils' progress has not speeded up as much as it should. Information about pupils' current levels of attainment and rates of progress indicates that the school's targets for attainment in this summer's assessments are unlikely to be met. In addition, the targets for 2012 are insufficiently challenging, given the better outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage last year.

There have been improvements to provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the leader has a good understanding of what needs to be developed further. The teachers plan and teach the same lessons in all three classes, but their skill in implementing them varies and this affects children's rates of progress. In one lesson, children not working with an adult were directed to other activities, limiting the scope for them to choose and to develop their independence.

Advisers and consultants have provided a high degree of support. The level of input reflects the authority's assessment of the school's capacity to bring about improvements from within. The headteacher has a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and the plan for improvement includes appropriate next steps. However, she has not had the support from experienced leaders at other levels that is needed to ensure that change is firmly embedded or that monitoring activities are shared. Although this situation has improved recently, the school is not in a position to drive improvement without the continuing support of the local authority.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. The support provided has been measured, well targeted and appropriate, and the quality of the support has been good. Staff mentioned how much they valued the advice and guidance of the

advanced skills teacher and the helpfulness of the links with another school. The impact of the support shows in better classroom practice and the improvements in pupils' progress. The fact that the school is not in the position that it should be at this time is a reflection of the impact of staff changes and the scale of the task, not the effectiveness of support.

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

Linda McGill  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that the majority achieve at least average levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in order to improve the quality of work in these core subjects.
  
- Eradicate inadequate teaching and ensure a higher proportion of good teaching by:
  - making better use of assessment information to tailor activities to pupils' needs
  - giving pupils individual targets, and ensure that both pupils and teachers have a clearer idea of how learning can be improved
  - making learning more fun and meaningful to pupils.
  
- Improve the rate of progress and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they reach levels more typical for their age by:
  - raising the expectations of staff and the level of challenge provided for children
  - ensuring more opportunities for constructive, independent learning.