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30 June 2011

Mrs A Mills  
The Headteacher  
Harewood Junior School  
Harewood Close  
Gloucester  
GL4 0SS

Dear Mrs Mills

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Harewood Junior School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 June 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 8 and 9 December 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 good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

School tracking and data show that pupils' progress in English and mathematics has accelerated further since the last inspection. Consequently, pupils are currently achieving well. Regular pupil progress meetings and performance management hold staff to account for the progress of pupils in each class. Teachers are increasing their knowledge of using assessment in lessons. They use this knowledge to plan tasks which are generally well matched to the different needs of most pupils, including pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities. Higher attaining pupils achieve well because they are provided with opportunities to move on to more challenging work. Occasionally, pupils make slower progress because tasks are not accurately matched to meet the needs of some individuals.

The progress of individual pupils and those from different groups is accelerating because teachers are using more opportunities for assessment in lessons. Consequently, the attainment of pupils has improved. Teachers' assessments show an increased number of potentially higher achieving pupils attain well in mathematics.

The improvements in teaching and assessment include a greater challenge in lessons. In an effective mathematics lesson the teacher reshaped the task of working out percentages to assess how well the pupils were doing. As a result, everyone made good progress. Lessons begin with clear objectives and these are generally referred to throughout the lesson so that most pupils know how to improve their work. Where teachers provide pupils with extension activities, these effectively challenge their thinking and help accelerate learning.

The school has developed the work of the teaching assistants well. Staff have received relevant training and as such now have the necessary skills to support pupils in lessons. This training has included working alongside colleagues and visits to other schools. Teaching assistants use good questioning to check pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. In an English lesson the teaching assistant carefully posed a question which helped pupils to work out how to join two sentences together using a connective. The way teachers and teaching assistants work as a team has improved, providing more opportunity for teaching assistants to feedback to teachers on the progress of the groups they are working with. The focus on training has provided teaching assistants with a more accurate understanding of pupil progress. The improved performance management arrangements mean the assistants are more accountable for the work they do in supporting pupils. During the main part of lessons teaching assistants support individuals and groups well. In a mathematics lesson the teaching assistant skilfully moved around the group so that no time was lost in helping pupils understand how to link fractions to percentages. At the start of some lessons, however, the position of the teaching assistant seated at the back of the group limits the support available to individual youngsters or small groups.

The work of the governing body has contributed well to improvements made to the school. An extensive programme of training, with support from the local authority, including an audit of skills, has helped governors to develop their roles and responsibilities. As well as evaluating their own effectiveness, the governing body has begun to seek the views of parents and carers through questionnaires and meetings. The comprehensive information the governors receive from the headteacher gives them an accurate view of the school's performance. They use this information to hold school leaders to account for further accelerating pupils' progress and improving achievement of all individuals. Consequently, the governing body now has a clearer understanding of self-evaluation.

Systems and structures are in place to review policies and procedures. This means documentation is reviewed regularly and in a timely manner. The schedule for meetings and distribution of minutes in advance mean that governors are better prepared to ask questions of the school in respect of its performance. A committee structure is in place which includes terms of reference for each committee. The clerk to the governing body takes minutes for full governing body meetings and for committee meetings. Consequently, there is continuity in the way meetings are organised and delivered. Actions to be taken following meetings are formally

recorded alongside the individual responsible. These are regularly reviewed and updated. In this way the work of the governing body is more systematic and fulfils statutory responsibilities.

The statement of action produced by the local authority following the last inspection meets requirements. The action plan is appropriate and school leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress being made through evaluation and review.

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

Jane Neech

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Further accelerate pupils' progress so that all achieve as well as they should by:
  - making sure that the tasks pupils are asked to do more closely match their learning needs
  - refining teachers' skills in assessing pupils' understanding during the course of lessons
  - ensuring that pupils move on to more challenging work as soon as they are ready
  - developing the work of teaching assistants so that they provide effective support for pupils in all parts of lessons.
- With the support of the local authority, increase the governing body's impact on the work of the school by:
  - ensuring that members of the governing body receive guidance and training to enable them to understand how they should hold the school's leaders to account for its performance
  - devising and implementing a schedule of meetings and other activities that ensures the work of the governing body is systematic
  - making sure that minutes of meetings record in more detail how statutory responsibilities have been fulfilled.