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Mrs C Fenton  
Headteacher  
Palmers Cross Primary School  
Windermere Road  
Tettenhall  
Wolverhampton  
WV6 9DF

Dear Mrs Fenton

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Palmers Cross Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 September 2011 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, and local authority and governing body representatives 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 previous inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. Three teachers have left the school and two newly qualified teachers have been appointed. The governing body have appointed existing staff to the following roles: acting head of Key Stage 1, acting head of Key Stage 2 and acting head of Early Years Foundation Stage. A senior member of staff has been appointed to take responsibility for safeguarding.

As a result of the inspection on 10 February 2011, 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.

The school has acted swiftly and decisively to address the issues relating to safeguarding. A senior member of staff has responsibility for safeguarding and ensures that the school meets all of the latest requirements. A rigorous training programme has been implemented for all staff and members of the governing body. The headteacher and a senior leader have completed appropriate training, including safe recruitment practices. The local authority has appointed an additional member

of the governing body with the appropriate skills and expertise to support the school. Senior leaders and members of the governing body have implemented robust procedures to ensure that policies and procedures are regularly checked. For example, a new sub-committee within the governing body has been formed to monitor and evaluate safeguarding. Parents too are kept well informed through regular newsletters and a parents and carers forum. The school has worked with the local authority to update policies relating to complaints made against members of staff. These have been approved by the governing body and copies distributed to all members of staff. Since the last inspection, all staff have received training in leading off-site educational visits. The headteacher has received training at a higher level as an off-site coordinator. All support staff have appropriate first aid qualifications, including paediatric first aid training. Secure policies and procedures are now in place to ensure pupils' safety during off-site visits. During the monitoring visit, the following policies and procedures were checked and found to meet the latest requirements: safeguarding, the single central record, off-site visits and complaints made against staff.

Attainment levels in reading, writing and mathematics are rising as a result of better quality teaching and learning. The latest school data indicate that a greater proportion of pupils are achieving National Curriculum levels commensurate with expectations for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in the 2011 national tests is above average at Levels 4 and 5 in writing and mathematics, and average in reading. Although pupils' achievement remains variable, senior leaders have acted quickly to eradicate any underachievement. An increasing proportion of pupils are making good progress in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 made accelerated progress in reading and mathematics. The large proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need make good gains in their learning. This is because teachers accurately assess pupils' learning and ensure that their personal development needs are met.

As a result of regular monitoring, coaching and training, the quality of pupils' learning has improved. In the best lessons observed, the pace of learning was brisk and pupils were given opportunities to work collaboratively. For example, pupils in Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed piecing together clues to solve a mystery. Teachers regularly assess how well pupils are achieving and use this information to plan lessons. As a result, activities planned in lessons are suitably challenging, particularly for those pupils who are more able. Marking is now more consistent and most pupils are given good quality feedback about how to improve their work, most notably in writing and mathematics.

Children join the Reception class with skills that are below the expected levels. They make at least satisfactory progress and some children make good progress, particularly in their personal development. With support from the local authority, planning has improved and clearly identifies a suitable balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy choosing

different activities, both indoors and outdoors. The doctors' surgery role-play area was popular and children sustained their concentration well.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and attendance levels have improved greatly since the last inspection. The school has implemented a 'zero tolerance' strategy to term-time holidays and this is proving to be very successful. Attendance figures have improved from 93.62% to 97.29%.

The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership that is improving outcomes for pupils. She is ably supported by a dedicated team. The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose and has made a good contribution to improving the quality of education at Palmers Cross.

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**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2011**

- Ensure, with immediate effect, that the school meets all requirements for keeping pupils and staff safe with particular respect to:
  - making sure that school safeguarding policies meet government requirements
  - ensuring risk assessments are completed fully
  - ensuring all staff undergo up-to-date training for safeguarding
  - ensuring there are clear procedures for dealing with complaints against staff
  - implementing procedures to ensure that the governing body and senior staff monitor and evaluate the safeguarding practices across the school.
  
- Improve the rate at which pupils make progress in lessons by:
  - improving the consistency with which assessment information is used in all lesson planning to better meet the needs of groups of differing abilities and, in particular, to better challenge the more-able
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and independently to solve problems
  - improving the quality of marking and feedback to that of the best in the school.
  
- Improve outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - providing more structured play activities, both indoors and outside, which engage children's interest and move their learning on more rapidly.
  
- Improve attendance further by:
  - discouraging parents and carers from taking their children out of school in term time.

