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Mrs M Moore  
Headteacher  
Hannah Ball School  
Philip Road  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP13 7JS

Dear Mrs Moore

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Hannah Ball School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff and members of the governing body gave when I inspected your school on 13 September 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please also pass on my best wishes to the pupils who were very friendly and helpful.

Since the previous inspection, the school has changed both its name to Hannah Ball School and its designation from an infant to a primary school. Pupils in Year 2 stayed on to Year 3 and numbers on roll have risen. The school will continue to grow year-on-year until it becomes an all-through primary school in September 2014. Following the previous inspection, a new Chair of the Governing Body was elected. This term, an Early Years Foundation Stage leader and Year 3 teacher have been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 12 and 13 January 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 satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Some improvements were made in the Reception class in the two terms following the previous inspection with the support of an advanced skills teacher. Nevertheless, planning remained at an early stage of development and assessment systems were unreliable, making it difficult for leaders to track the progress of children with any accuracy. This term, the new and experienced Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made a strong start in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous

inspection. She has high expectations of the children and is establishing clear routines to develop good personal and social skills. As a result, she has created a calm and purposeful learning environment. Already, on their second day in school, children behaved well and were learning to share and take turns. They responded well to the promptings of staff and were eager to take part in the range of stimulating activities on offer. For example, they enjoyed playing their part as waiters and customers in the 'café'. Over the summer, the new leader has reviewed the resources used to ensure that they are both of good quality and are conducive to good learning, both inside and out. She has plans to check them regularly to ensure they remain safe and fit-for-purpose.

Planning in the Reception class is now designed to meet children's needs in all six areas of their learning through well-chosen themes. Currently, there is a strong and appropriate emphasis on developing children's knowledge of sounds and letters and counting skills in many of the activities. The leader is setting up learning journals for each child which will record their progress. Using a range of observations, she and her teaching assistant are establishing what each child knows and understands. This information will be used to track the progress of each individual, to plan to meet the wide range of needs in the class and to tackle any underachievement that becomes evident. The teacher is modelling the correct formation of letters and numbers very carefully in order to establish good habits from the outset.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils behave well and enjoy their learning. Most make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, regardless of their background or abilities. In 2011, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level for their age at the end of Key Stage 1 was higher than the previous year. However, hardly any went on to reach the higher level, which is reflective of a lack of pace and challenge for the most-able pupils in Year 2.

The school's marking code is implemented consistently, which gives pupils a clear understanding of how successful they have been in meeting the objective of lessons, although self-assessment is less well developed. Pupils' work is marked regularly and conscientiously, often with helpful pointers for improvement. However, children are not given enough opportunities to consider and respond to the comments in order to improve their work. Each pupil has an individual target in literacy and numeracy. In Year 1, marking makes some reference to targets but not in Year 2. Hence, marking is still not always clear about what pupils need to do in order to reach their targets.

Following the previous inspection, the school has developed more rigorous systems for monitoring attendance and to make parents and carers aware of the impact of poor attendance on their children's learning. For example, parents and carers are now contacted by text on the first day of absence and holidays in term time are no longer authorised. In the relatively few cases where attendance remains an issue, parents and carers are asked to attend a meeting to discuss the issues and to suggest possible solutions. As a result, attendance improved significantly between the previous inspection and the end of the last school year. More needs to be done,

however, to maintain this improvement as figures for the previous full school year remain low.

The local authority's statement of action explaining how it would support the school following the previous inspection was deemed by Ofsted to be 'fit for purpose'. The support provided through the plan has been effective in helping the school to address the weaknesses outlined in the report. For example, the support of the education welfare officer has helped the school to make considerable improvements in attendance. The provision of an advanced skills teacher helped the Reception teacher to make some improvements last year. The School Improvement Partner has brokered this support well and provided the headteacher with accurate and candid assessments of the school's progress.

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

**Graham Lee**  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Check that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive good quality provision by:
  - ensuring that all teaching and planning addresses the wide range of abilities in the Reception class
  - making sure that when children start to write recognisable letters and numbers they are taught how to write them with the correct formation.
  - enabling children, who are confident at writing simple words, to develop basic sentence construction such as when to use capital letters and full stops
  - checking that the management and organisation of all activities enables children to develop good personal and social skills and always behave well
  - making sure that the learning environment and the resources used, both inside and out, are regularly checked to make sure they are safe and conducive to good learning
  - appointing a leader who regularly monitors children's progress, taking action if there is evidence of underachievement.
  
- Improve the way all teachers mark children's work by:
  - making sure that children receive clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve and reach their literacy and numeracy targets.
  
- Improve attendance by:
  - developing more rigorous systems to monitor attendance
  - working with parents and carers to emphasise that learning is badly affected when their children miss school.