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Mrs S Nasa
Headteacher
Graiseley Primary School
Pool Street
Graiseley Hill
Wolverhampton
WV2 4NE

Dear Mrs Nasa

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Graiseley Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 December 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please extend my thanks to pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the representative from the local authority, who met with me.

Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.

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

The results of the 2011 national assessments show low attainment at the end of Year 2 and broadly average attainment for Year 6. In both year groups, boys' attainment was well below that of the girls. Writing remains the weakest area. For example, school data show that currently less than one third of pupils in Year 6 are working at the nationally expected level. Nevertheless, an analysis of current data conducted by the school during the inspection pointed to increasing proportions of pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, albeit from a low base.

The governing body has acted promptly to ensure that its policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children meet its statutory obligations. An appropriate safeguarding policy has been introduced, and systems for regularly reviewing its effectiveness have been agreed. Similarly, the governing body has tackled weaknesses in its procedures for assessing risk. In addition to dealing with areas identified during the previous inspection, the governing body has conducted a thorough review of other policies and established a timetable for monitoring and updating these in the future.

A weakness in all of the lessons observed was the use made of assessment information to match work to the needs of pupils. For example, in a session teaching letters and sounds (phonics), lower-attaining pupils who had recently joined a higher-attaining group did not make sufficient progress because the lesson moved at a pace appropriate only for the high attainers. In a mathematics lesson, work provided for lower-attaining pupils was far too challenging and, when the work was discussed with two of the pupils, it was clear that they had not understood their task. In a different mathematics lesson, the provision for a pupil at a very early stage of speaking English as an additional language raised concerns about the quality of care, guidance and support in the school. Since joining the school, no assessment had been made of the pupil's cognitive ability or earlier learning experiences. She worked separately from the others in the class at a task suitable for a very young child. School leaders showed documents that indicate that transition arrangements for children joining the school are usually more effective than this. In a writing lesson, the expectation of what the lower-attaining pupils could achieve was far too low and too much time was spent copying sentences rather than writing independently. Pupils now have learning targets in writing and these are helping pupils in some classes to understand how well they are learning and what they need to do next to improve.

Subject leaders are at a very early stage for taking responsibility for driving improvement in their subject areas. With support from the local authority, the literacy leader has carried out a number of activities such as introducing targets, and monitoring planning and work in pupils' books. However, generally there is a lack of clarity about the impact of subject leaders' work on pupil progress. For example, the action plan in mathematics has targets such as 'revise medium term plans' and 'maintain and improve resources'. The intended outcomes make no reference to measurable targets for improving pupil attainment. The senior leadership team does not hold subject leaders to account for the impact of their work on pupil progress throughout the school or analyse the cost effectiveness of management time.

The school has very been very successful in its efforts to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. It has used an imaginative range of strategies to

promote and celebrate high attendance. Equally important is the rigour with which it has acted to remind families of all pupils with attendance below 90% of their responsibilities and the negative impact of poor attendance. Attendance this year is considerably higher than at the same time in 2010. The number of persistently absent pupils has been greatly reduced.

The statement of action submitted by the local authority meets requirements. In line with the statement, the local authority has provided support but this has not been effective in building the capacity of subject leaders or ensuring that teaching improves quickly. The local authority's own most recent audit of teaching was conducted in September. This has meant that there has been little external monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observation since the previous inspection.

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

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Ensure that members of the governing body meet all their statutory obligations by September 2011, particularly that:
 - the requirements for policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children are fully met, and that these are regularly reviewed and implemented
 - appropriate risk assessments are carried out and regularly reviewed.

- Raise attainment further, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in writing, by:
 - ensuring there is consistent use of the new systems to assess and track pupils' progress, to more closely match work to the needs of pupils
 - helping pupils to understand what they need to do next and increasing their independence
 - developing the role of subject leaders to take responsibility for identifying and implementing strategies for improvement and evaluating the success of these.

- Increase attendance overall, and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent by:
 - developing further schemes to encourage and reward regular attendance
 - demonstrating to parents and carers the importance of regular attendance by publicising examples where pupils with good attendance achieve well.