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Mrs L Nichols  
Headteacher  
Grovelands Infant and Nursery School  
Terrace Road  
Walton-on-Thames  
Surrey  
KT12 2EB

Dear Mrs Nichols

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Grovelands Infant and Nursery School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 May 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the two representatives from the local authority who held meetings with me.

As a result of the inspection on 3 and 4 October 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.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children, especially the more able, show much improved achievement in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy as the result of much improved provision in the outdoor area. Children make good progress in exploring patterns in two-dimensional shapes, buying items and giving/receiving change in the shop and, for example, sorting toy cars by colour and making a graph to show the results. Adults engage much more purposefully in questioning children in the outdoor area and this has a positive impact on moving their learning forward. Day-to-day assessment is much more consistent, particularly in recording observations of children's learning. These assessments are used consistently across Nursery and Reception and give staff and parents and carers a detailed picture of children's progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In Years 1 and 2, achievement in mathematics has improved significantly, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. This is the result of much greater challenge from teachers, especially in giving pupils more open-ended problems. In reading, achievement is improving rapidly, particularly since March, when staff completed updated training in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and guided reading. Those pupils in Year 2 who read to the inspector were confident, used their knowledge of letters and sounds successfully and talked confidently about books they enjoy. In writing, although improving, progress is slower. From a brief sample of pupils' writing, indicators are that marking does not consistently tell pupils how they can improve their work nor is it linked closely enough to their writing targets.

The inspector carried out joint lesson observations in Years 1 and 2 with the headteacher and he confirmed that the headteacher's judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. These observations confirmed the results of lesson observations carried out by the headteacher and the local authority that inadequate teaching has been eliminated and that the majority of lessons have improved in quality. Teachers' planning is much more detailed and focuses closely on meeting the learning needs of the differing ability groups within each class. Inconsistencies remain in that, on occasions, teachers do not make it explicitly clear to pupils what they must do in order to be successful learners by the end of the lesson. Teachers use assessment more effectively to inform their planning and there are good examples of teachers annotating their daily planning based on what happened in the previous lesson. The much stronger focus on pupils' progress, discussed in regular meetings, means that teachers are more accountable for assessing the progress of their pupils. As the result of training, teachers are much more successful in helping pupils to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds in their reading and writing. As at the time of the last inspection, the inspector observed that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.

Through effective training and support, middle leaders have significantly improved their roles in monitoring teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' progress. The English leader has a more detailed picture of pupils' progress in guided reading and, with support from the headteacher and governing body, has used additional funding successfully to introduce a good range of support programmes to help pupils at risk of falling behind. The mathematics leader has a good understanding of why pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly as the result of much improved challenge for all pupils, including the decision to abandon teaching the subject in ability groups (sets). Leaders for Year 1 and Year 2 know the strengths in the performance of their teams and have a clear understanding of areas for improvement, including the need to improve pupils' writing.

The local authority statement of action is deemed fit for purpose. It has provided good support for the school from specialist consultants, who provide effective training, especially in the teaching of reading and in developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. Links with a partner infant school within the local

authority have proved particularly beneficial in the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning. The Early Years Advisor has provided very good support in improving the use of the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The governing body is supportive and challenging and shows great determination and commitment to making the school good. It has used the school's budget wisely to provide additional teaching support and in-service training for staff and there is an absolute determination that these additional resources provide value for money.

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

David Curtis  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve achievement by July 2012 by:
  - raising the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels of attainment in reading and higher levels in mathematics at the end of Year 2
  - accelerating pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2, especially in reading
  - enabling pupils to apply their phonic skills consistently to reading and writing.
  
- Eliminate inadequate teaching as a matter of urgency and, by July 2012, ensure the majority of lessons are good by:
  - improving the extent to which assessment information is used to inform planning
  - providing staff training in the teaching of reading, including guided reading, and in helping children to apply phonic skills when reading and writing
  - ensuring that work throughout lessons is carefully matched to all pupils' capabilities and builds on their existing skills.
  
- Improve provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by July 2012 by:
  - giving higher attaining children in Reception better opportunities for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy in their outdoor learning
  - increasing adult intervention and ensuring children make balanced choices across the areas of learning during outdoor activities
  - implementing common tracking procedures for checking children's progress throughout Nursery and in Reception.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - focusing the monitoring and evaluation of teaching on reading, ensuring it covers all teachers quickly, and providing support where needed, so that pupils' progress improves rapidly.