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Mrs Sadler
Headteacher
Woodcroft Primary School
Woodcroft Lane
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Dear Mrs Sadler

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Woodcroft Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 January 2011 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to your staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, the representative from the local authority and the pupils who made time to meet me during the day.

Since the previous inspection there have been some changes to teaching and support staff. The school has also been awarded an Enhanced Healthy School award.

As a result of the inspection on 19–20 May 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 inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the achievement of pupils.

Since the previous inspection the skills of children entering Reception have improved in comparison to previous cohorts. In the current Reception class children enter with skills broadly expected for their age except in writing, linking letters and sounds and reading where they are below age-expected levels. Generally, they continue to make satisfactory progress with some making good progress. Attainment remains low in both Key Stages 1 and 2. This, combined with inadequate progress as pupils move through both key stages, results in achievement remaining inadequate.

Progress throughout the school is inconsistent and inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics despite a small number of pupils beginning to make good progress

as a result of additional intervention programmes. Book scrutiny and lesson observations indicate that endemic weaknesses remain in the quality of teaching and assessment. During this visit all class teachers were observed and the quality of teaching seen was inadequate in most classes. Despite changes to planning the work set is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs as a result of inaccurate teacher expectations and assessments and a lack of understanding of what pupils need to do next to improve their outcomes. These weaknesses, combined with gaps in teachers' subject knowledge, result in some lessons proceeding at a slow pace. In these lessons pupils become confused and disengaged; this is particularly the case for boys and, as a result, behaviour is only satisfactory.

Teachers' questioning of pupils has improved since the previous inspection. For example, it is used to assess pupils' understanding of new concepts and to correct misconceptions. Pupils are now set targets in literacy and numeracy and have an opportunity to respond to teachers' marking. However, these initiatives are still not embedded across the school or within subjects; consequently pupils are still not always clear on how to improve their work.

The school tracking document has been developed since the previous inspection and teachers now hold regular review meetings where they consider the intervention required to support pupils who are underachieving. However, teacher assessment is not always accurate enough to enable senior leaders to track pupils' progress with the rigour that is required to tackle past and current underachievement. Senior leaders along with the local authority are considering ways of addressing this issue.

Changes to the curriculum have taken place to provide pupils with a meaningful context in which to learn. Pupils report that they enjoy the increased opportunities to learn about geography and participate in cooking lessons. However, the curriculum still requires further adjustments to engage pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. Planning for the progression of skills has begun and teachers and pupils are at the early stages of evaluating each part of the curriculum. Pupils' topic books reveal an over-reliance on the use of worksheets with little evidence of pupils applying their skills in literacy or numeracy within this work.

Pupils feel very safe and know they can turn to an adult for support at any time. They value the opportunity to talk about their feelings and on the whole enjoy coming to school. However, attendance fluctuates between broadly average to low. Senior leaders are aware of this issue and have been addressing it in a variety of ways such as, the use of their home-school link worker and individual attendance plans.

The local authority's statement of action was fit for purpose and has supported the school in addressing the issues identified in the previous inspection. However the changes brought about by this support have not occurred quickly enough and as a result the impact on the areas identified in the previous inspection is inadequate. The significant challenge for senior leaders is now to rapidly accelerate progress and

improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupil outcomes are at least satisfactory.

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

Susan Gadd

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2010

- Accelerate the progress of all pupils in reading and mathematics, and especially in writing, by:
 - setting higher expectations for all pupils
 - improving planning for lessons to ensure a closer match of appropriate tasks to different groups of pupils
 - setting a consistently good pace to learning in lessons.

- Improve teachers' uses of assessment by:
 - ensuring that marking more regularly indicates the next steps in pupils' learning
 - making more consistent use of learning targets in order to increase rates of progress
 - using questions more effectively to gauge the extent of pupils' understanding.

- Develop the curriculum with the aim of improving its relevance to pupils in order to sustain their interest and heighten their motivation to learn.