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21 January 2011

Mr R Beel  
Headteacher  
Woodlands Primary School  
Pinewood Crescent  
Grimsby  
Lincolnshire  
DN33 1RJ

Dear Mr Beel

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Woodlands Primary School**

Following my visit with Mr Adrian Guy HMI to your school on 19 and 20 January 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying the letter and monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for North East Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Rutherford  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2011



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 21 April 2010**

- Raise attainment and improve achievement in English and mathematics by:
  - identifying specific areas of weakness in each subject
  - devising plans to eliminate the identified weaknesses
  - planning work which matches the specific needs of pupils
  - ensuring that teaching is good or better in all lessons.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - identifying and eradicating weaknesses in teaching across the school
  - implementing a programme of support for those teachers identified as having weaknesses in their practice
  - concentrating on improving the quality of learning in lessons.
  
- Ensure that leaders and managers put the necessary improvements into place by:
  - fully involving all staff and the governing body in evaluating the school's performance
  - working together to plan and implement effective strategies to remedy the weaknesses in the school's work
  - ensuring that continued monitoring of the school's performance is rigorous and accurate and results in improvements.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Woodlands Primary School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 19 to 20 January 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and records of pupils' achievements and analysed pupils' work. They met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, the chair and two members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and they had a telephone discussion with the School Improvement Partner.

#### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

Lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and school records show that the proportion of pupils making expected or better than expected progress in English and mathematics has increased since the first monitoring inspection. The increase is greater in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1, reflecting a difference between the key stages in the rate at which the quality of teaching is improving. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 continue to rise steadily but, because of the legacy of underachievement throughout the school, they are not as high as they should be. Teachers are giving priority to improving pupils' achievement in writing, which has been a weaker area in the past, and this work is having a clear, positive impact in most Key Stage 2 classes.

In over half of the classes in Key Stage 2, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are significantly improving their achievement, but this is not yet consistent across the school. This is because systems for adapting work to meet the needs of these pupils are not firmly established in all classes. More-able pupils are not yet making progress as rapidly as they should; therefore, there is little evidence of attainment at an above-average level. Teachers are improving their use of assessment information to provide additional support for pupils whose progress is beginning to stall. They have not yet analysed the progress of these pupils to evaluate how effective the support is.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is increasing. The overwhelming majority have very positive attitudes to work. They pay attention, concentrate and persevere with their tasks. Where the quality of teaching has improved most, pupils accelerate their progress significantly by working well independently and learning through discussion.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise attainment and improve achievement in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

## **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Staff have maintained the high standards of pupils' behaviour and attendance that were found in the previous monitoring inspection. These positive features make a strong contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and their improving progress. The Year 6 pupils in the learning council have made remarkable progress in developing their skills for making a positive contribution to the school community. Since the school was placed in special measures they have attended conferences and visited other schools to extend their understanding of effective learning. They have given presentations to staff and governors about how learning could be improved in their own school. As a result, there have been improvements in teacher-pupil relationships, independent learning and the learning environment. They are now extending this effective work further by training their successors in Year 5.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

The proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. Senior leaders have taken firm action to improve the weakest teaching; however, a persisting minority that is inadequate or pedestrian causes dips in pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is improving too slowly in Key Stage 1.

Where teaching has improved, much more effective use of assessment enables the majority of pupils to accelerate their progress. Lessons are well planned to provide the correct level of challenge for most groups of pupils. Teachers continuously analyse the needs of pupils and adjust their groups accordingly. They involve pupils in assessing their own work with increasing effectiveness. Pupils are clear about their targets and what they need to achieve in each piece of work to make progress towards meeting them. The pace of learning is improving because teachers provide pupils with stimulating starts to lessons and plenty of time for working independently on interesting tasks. Teachers' questions promote learning because they are suitably challenging and all pupils are involved in planning answers through discussion with partners and jotting ideas on whiteboards.

The rate of improvement in some classes is slow because there has been insufficient increase in the pace of pupils' learning. Teachers' explanations are long, uninspiring and not always related to the objective for the lesson. Pupils make little progress in independent tasks because they are unclear about what is required or there is too little time. In Key Stage 1, pupils make too little progress in lessons where they are given choices because activities often lack a clear learning purpose and because adults provide insufficient challenge to learn through talk.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better – satisfactory.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Senior leaders and the majority of staff are working very hard to remove the school's causes for concern. The leadership team is increasing its capacity to bring about the necessary improvements without external intervention. They have an accurate understanding of the school's remaining weaknesses and a clear, practical plan for tackling them. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that staff are not trying to improve too many aspects of work at the same time. Where all staff have worked together on a priority, for example, developing a shared understanding of what constitutes a good lesson or involving pupils in assessing their own work, there has been a positive impact in most classes. Senior leaders make increasingly effective use of external support from a range of sources, keeping it tightly focused on the school's priorities. They have developed strong partnerships with other schools which is helping them to learn from proven effective practice.

Senior leaders are improving their use of information about pupils' progress for evaluating the overall quality of teaching. However, they are not yet using this information systematically for checking the effectiveness of additional support for underachieving pupils. A thorough approach to monitoring lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work gives senior leaders a clear understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses, although subsequent feedback to teachers is not as helpful as it might be. This is because it does not always show the links between the quality of teaching and its impact on the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.

Almost all senior and middle leaders provide highly effective teaching for their own classes. They are not yet sufficiently involved in helping colleagues to improve their teaching so that effective methods can become more embedded across the school. With the help of the Year 6 learning council, senior leaders make very good use of pupils' views when deciding how the quality of teaching and learning can be improved.

The governing body is improving its role in monitoring the work of the school, especially by increasing the involvement of parent governors. The parent governors are also developing an effective channel of communication between the school and the parent body as a whole. Parents and carers are, therefore, more informed about the progress of the school and the school has a better understanding of their views. Through the standards and monitoring committee of the governing body, the chair and other members work constructively with local authority officers and the School Improvement Partner in scrutinising the progress of the school, asking probing questions and ensuring that external support is fit for purpose. This gives the governing body an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and remaining weaknesses.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the area for improvement:

- Improve self-evaluation and ensure that it leads to improvement in the quality of teaching and standards – satisfactory.

## **External support**

The local authority recovery officer and School Improvement Partner keep the school under close review. They provide useful guidance and ensure that the school has access to the external support that will best meet its needs. Support is planned in full collaboration with school leaders so that it does not undermine the development of their own capacity to improve provision and raise standards. Guidance in identifying schools that provide models of effective practice has been particularly useful and partnerships with these schools are a beneficial addition to the leadership team's improvement plans.