

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

**Ofsted**  
T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
**Direct T** 0121 683 3888



17 March 2011

Mr D Walton  
Woodham Ley Primary School  
Rushbottom Lane  
Great Tarpots  
Benfleet  
SS7 4DN

Dear Mr Walton

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Woodham Ley Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 March 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson  
**Additional Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The single area for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010**

- Raise attainment and increase rates of learning and progress in English, by:
  - making sure that teachers understand the pace, challenge and expectation required to ensure that all pupils make swift gains in their learning
  - using information gained from tracking pupils' progress and from marking to match work consistently to pupils' needs
  - ensuring pupils know their targets and how to improve their work
  - sharpening the skills of leaders and managers at all levels in identifying priorities for development
  - increasing the rigour with which leaders and managers monitor the school's performance in order to take action that will bring about sustainable improvements to the quality of provision.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Woodham Ley Primary School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 15 March 2011**

#### **Evidence**

The monitoring inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and advisory deputy headteacher, senior teachers, pupils, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, and representatives from the local authority. He observed learning in all seven classes by visiting 10 lessons, and 'early morning' activities designed to help pupils settle quickly to work as they arrive at the start of the day. He also looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work.

#### **Context**

There have been no changes in the organisation of teaching personnel since the previous monitoring inspection in November 2010. However, at the time of this inspection, the Reception class teacher was absent and this class was taught by a supply teacher. Further changes in teaching staff are due to take place. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed, and will take up the post in September 2011. The class teacher in Year 1 has resigned and will leave at the end of this term.

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

Pupils' progress is accelerating and most acquire skills and knowledge at the expected rate. This improvement is the result of better teaching, regular monitoring of pupils' progress which informs carefully targeted support for individuals, and pupils' continued positive attitudes towards their education. In all lessons, teachers ensure that pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their work. This focus is particularly sharp in the Year 6 class, where progress is good. In an English lesson, for example, pupils' maturity in analysing their work with classmates and the resulting thoughtful suggestions, contributed strongly to the good learning that took place. In Year 5, pupils have additional catching up to do as a legacy of inadequate teaching in the previous year. The school's leaders at all levels are acutely aware of the need to improve this year group. There is a clear plan of action to target individual pupils who continue to struggle with some aspects of their work and to eliminate this remaining pocket of underachievement.

The school continues to improve pupils' basic skills. Pupils' better knowledge of multiplication tables has improved their speed and accuracy in tackling calculations. Pupils' skills in spelling and punctuation are improving because teachers are more rigorous in ensuring that pupils review their writing and improve it. Despite the continued emphasis on developing pupils' skills as writers, attainment in writing

remains weaker than in reading or mathematics and for this reason it remains the school's major focus for further improvement.

Standards are rising in both key stages. In Years 1 to 4, attainment in English and mathematics is broadly in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of these ages at this point in the school year. However, despite satisfactory progress, attainment in Year 5 remains below age-related expectations. In Year 6 almost all pupils are on course to meet national expectations in English and mathematics by the end of the school year and some are set to exceed them. In this year group, there has been a particular focus on science in order to compensate for lack of attention given to the subject during the previous year. Attainment in science is now on track to be broadly in line with national expectations.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils' continued good attitudes towards their education have a positive impact on their progress. All pupils interviewed said that they really enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and valued and because they are interested and excited by their lessons. These sentiments are reflected in the significantly improved rates of attendance, which have been sustained at above average levels since the previous monitoring inspection. Typical of the comments made by pupils are, 'Lessons are a lot more interesting now...they were a bit boring before.' Pupils' improved levels of interest and enjoyment are amply illustrated in their response to English lessons in Years 3, 4 and 5. Their fascination in the life and customs of ancient Egypt resulted in rapt attention to what their teachers had to say and sustained concentration on their writing tasks. Pupils appreciate the actions taken to improve their health and well-being, such as the new equipment provided for physical education, the range of extra-curricular activities and the better quality of school meals. They continue to value the greater opportunities that they have to contribute to the day-to-day running of the school. Pupils in Year 6 feel that they are really helping to make a difference by taking on responsibilities as prefects or play leaders. Pupils' moral and social development continues to improve, securely underpinned by the 'Woodham Way' code. This is displayed throughout the premises and sets out very clear expectations for conduct. Pupils relate well to one another and their behaviour is generally good. Pupils' spiritual development is also improving as a result of better quality plenary sessions at the end of lessons. These sessions not only help reinforce learning but also develop pupils' appreciation of their own and others' achievements.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The school's senior managers and the local authority continue to make the improvement of teaching and learning their highest priority. This is because they acknowledge that the weaknesses identified in teaching at the time of the January 2010 inspection were not confined to English, but were widespread.

All of the teaching observed during the course of this monitoring inspection was at least satisfactory, and a minority of teaching was good. This situation represents continued improvement as a result of the intense focus on developing teachers' skills. Teachers are good at managing and organising their pupils, they relate well to their pupils and make very clear to pupils what they intend them to learn. Where teaching is best, these learning intentions are underpinned by a very sharp focus on precisely what each individual pupil needs to do to move from the National Curriculum level at which they are working to the next level. This practice highly motivates pupils and is most often a feature of lessons in Year 6, where it has resulted in the accelerated learning needed to ensure that pupils catch up in developing their knowledge and skills. In the majority of lessons, the good technical features of teaching, such as skilled questioning, result in only satisfactory rather than good learning. This occurs because, when planning their lessons, teachers do not think through their intentions carefully enough and therefore do not have a really clear understanding of precisely what they intend pupils to learn. This specific weakness was one of a number identified at the time of the last monitoring visit and is yet to be fully addressed. Other weaknesses, such as injecting greater pace into pupils' learning and ensuring that pupils apply previously learned knowledge and skills when tackling the work set for them, have been successfully tackled.

A scrutiny of pupils' books showed that teaching is typically a little better than in the sample of lessons observed. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is generally effective in helping pupils to improve, but practice is inconsistent between classes. In most instances, teachers ensure that pupils correct their work and respond to the comments made. The best practice in marking is found in Years 3 and 4 where pupils regularly evaluate their own work and there is good dialogue between teacher and pupils. The accuracy of teachers' assessments of their pupils has improved and has been validated by the local authority. Teachers now make satisfactory use of their assessments of pupils' learning to pitch work at suitably challenging levels and to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are clearly identified.

The 'early morning' activities contribute to the good climate for learning in all classes by ensuring that pupils have useful tasks to work at from the moment that they arrive. These tasks are highly focused on helping pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. The use of 'working walls' in all classes continues to provide pupils with useful reminders of, for example, how to tabulate calculations correctly or hints to help improve their writing.

The strong emphasis placed on all aspects of pupils' personal development contributes strongly to the improvements in learning. A culture in which good behaviour, regular attendance and good punctuality are considered the norm is rapidly developing. Pupils greatly value the weekly award for the best class attendance, and the award presented by the site manager for the tidiest classroom. A recent initiative, which is proving successful in helping pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively, is the Smart Thinking Group. This provides a weekly

opportunity for a small number of selected pupils to discuss and reflect on different ways of responding to situations which they may find challenging.

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

The changing role of the consultant deputy headteacher reflects the good progress made in developing capacity within leadership and management. Instead of helping the headteacher and local authority to drive improvement through training and mentoring in the way that was required initially, the consultant now supports the on-going development of senior teachers as leaders and managers. This is largely done by providing them with time out of class to develop their roles. The senior staff members responsible for English and mathematics have now gained experience in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, through mentored observations. This perspective, together with the training and support provided, is helping inform their view of what needs to be done to improve attainment and progress further. The school recognises that the next step required is to develop the skills of other staff in providing subject leadership across all areas of the curriculum and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The system for tracking pupils' progress, which is effectively managed by the headteacher and consultant deputy head, provides very clear information about attainment and progress and aids their monitoring of the impact of teaching. Governance has improved significantly. As a result of the support provided by the local authority, governors are now better informed and more involved in monitoring the work of the school. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they regularly hold the school to account through their questioning. Training for governors is on-going. Governors accept that they are yet to look closely at provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and that they lack understanding of the performance data for this key stage. Recent appointments mean that there is a full complement of governors for the first time for a number of years.

#### Judgement

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

- Raise attainment and increase rates of learning and progress in English – good

#### **External support**

The local authority's support for the school has had a positive impact in improving the quality of teaching and learning over the past year. This improvement has been achieved largely through the work of the advisory deputy headteacher, the advice and training provided by consultants and on-going monitoring through regular visits from the school improvement adviser.