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24 September 2010

Mr Robert 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 Rosemary Eaton, Additional Inspector, to your school on 22 and 23 September 2010, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2010. The most important 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 – **satisfactory**

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

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 North East Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in 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 inspection of Woodlands Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 September 2010**

#### **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, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

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

Unvalidated published data for 2010 shows a rise in standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. This reverses a declining trend in the previous two years and reflects the school's effective use of the additional support from the local authority that had already been put in place prior to the inspection. The rise is largely the result of pupils making rapid progress in the upper two years of Key Stage 2. In Years 1 to 4, pupils are not making sufficient progress and they lose ground, therefore, despite some catching up in Years 5 and 6, standards are not yet as high as they could be.

The school's records, pupils' work and lesson observations show that the very large majority of pupils make better than expected progress in Years 5 and 6. This is a result of interesting teaching that challenges all groups of pupils. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress in reading and writing, while those identified as gifted and talented do particularly well in mathematics. When children start in Early Years Foundation Stage, they very quickly develop their skills in speaking and in independent learning. This is because they benefit from stimulating learning activities within very well-organised provision. The progress of all groups of pupils slows considerably in Years 1 to 4 because teaching is not closely matched to their learning needs.

Progress since the inspection on the areas for improvement:

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

#### **Other relevant outcomes for pupils**

Most of the time, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. The only exceptions are when some pupils become restless in lessons because they are unclear about their work or their learning activities lack interest. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are completely engrossed in activities, such as exploring the wildlife area and the sheer joy of discovering brightly coloured snails, which enhances their spiritual development. In general, pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. The recently introduced learning council is already enabling small groups of pupils to make a strong positive contribution to the school's

improvement, for example when they formally give staff their views on how teaching and learning could be more effective.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The peaks and troughs in pupils' progress are related to variability in the quality of teaching. Pupils make good progress in lessons where the introduction to new ideas is motivating and concise and there is plenty of time for working independently on interesting problem-solving activities. A key strength is that teachers continuously assess pupils' progress during these lessons and immediately alter the level of support or challenge when required. Where progress slows down, it is because teachers give too much time to repetitive explanation or unchallenging questions and they do not provide enough practical activity to help pupils consolidate their understanding. Work is often too complicated for lower-attaining pupils or too unchallenging for the higher attainers.

The school's leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and have been taking concerted action to improve it. There are clear signs of improvement since the inspection, although there is still a small proportion of inadequate teaching and too little that is good or outstanding. Improvements can be seen, particularly in the learning environment and in the teaching of mathematical calculations and reading. Teachers have a much more accurate knowledge of the levels at which pupils are working but not all are yet using this information effectively when planning lessons.

Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' progress, especially those pupils who are lower attainers. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching assistants play an important part in helping teachers to develop children's speaking and listening skills.

Progress since the 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 have maintained the staff's high morale following the designation of special measures and there is a shared determination to raise standards as quickly as possible. All staff are keen to improve the quality of their work. Senior leaders provide clear and practical short-term plans for raising standards with ambitious targets for the rate of improvement. Staff understand and support these plans because they are involved in identifying the key priorities. The plans are further strengthened because they take account of the views of pupils expressed through their learning council. A similar approach is being developed for parents and carers.

Since the inspection, senior leaders have developed a much stronger focus on improving standards. This is particularly evident in their more systematic approach

to evaluating the quality of teaching and to analysing information about pupils' progress. Leaders, therefore, provide guidance to staff based on a much clearer understanding of strengths and weaknesses and this is beginning to bring about improvements. The recently introduced meetings about pupils' progress, during which senior leaders and teachers check that individual pupils are receiving work that enables them to make as much progress as possible, are an important aspect of this work. Senior leaders are still developing their strategies, for example lesson observations are increasingly focused on improving one aspect of teaching at a time and progress records are being updated more frequently to enable earlier identification of pupils whose progress is stalling.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong partnership. They are well supported by a team of year group leaders, most of whom make a positive contribution to implementing the school's improvement plan. In particular, leaders of the upper school and the Early Years Foundation Stage have a strong influence on improving teaching and learning beyond their own classrooms. The role of subject leaders is at an early stage of development; therefore, they are not yet having sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching.

The governing body's role in monitoring the school's improvement is developing well. The Chair has a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. While supporting school leaders in making necessary changes, he does not shirk from asking probing questions. He works hard to ensure that the governing body is fully representative of parents and carers and he organises training to help members to be more effective in their roles.

Progress since the inspection on the areas 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's action plan fulfils Ofsted's requirements. It dovetails well with the school's action plans. A key strength is that the local authority carefully analysed the school's strengths and needs before drawing up its plan for support and monitoring. As a result, support is well tailored to meet the school's needs and monitoring has been streamlined by using the governors' well-established monitoring and standards committee and adding external partners to it. The headteacher has a central role in managing external support, which is ensuring that it aligns with the school's priorities while building leaders' capacity to sustain improvement in the future.