

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
BRISTOL  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 0845 123 6001  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) **Direct email:** rebecca.jackson@tribalgroup.com

25 November 2011

Mrs Joan McGrath  
The Executive Headteacher  
Woodlands Junior School  
Loxford Lane  
Ilford  
Essex  
IG1 2PY

Dear Mrs McGrath

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

Following my visit with Ann Short, Additional Inspector, to your school on 23 and 24 November 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 January 2011. 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.

Newly qualified teachers may not 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 Redbridge.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders analyse the assessments of pupils' work in order to identify underachievement quickly and implement strategies to address it
  - ensuring that senior leaders robustly monitor these strategies to make certain they are fully effective.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by April 2012 by:
  - ensuring that senior leaders rigorously monitor teaching and provide effective feedback
  - improving teachers' planning and use of assessment so that the learning needs of different groups of pupils are met
  - improving the quality of marking in order to provide consistent guidance to pupils on the next steps in their learning
    - ensuring that pupils are fully involved in their learning in lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that it challenges and holds senior school leaders to account for pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching in the school.

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

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 23 and 24 November 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed parts of 15 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Seven lesson observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher and the associate headteacher. Inspectors met with school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. They talked to pupils in lessons and met with groups of pupils from Year 3 and Year 6. Inspectors looked at teachers' planning and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also examined a range of school documents, including self-evaluation, monitoring and information about pupil progress and attainment.

#### **Context**

The substantive headteacher, who was not present at the time of the previous monitoring inspection, has resigned. An executive headteacher has been in post since September and will continue until August 2012. An associate headteacher has also been in post since September and will continue until August 2013. The two deputy headteachers were absent during the monitoring inspection. There have been a number of staffing changes since July. Six teachers left and some classes are currently taught by temporary teachers. New appointments have been made for January, including a senior leader who will join the school on a part-time basis until August 2012. There is also a new chair of governors.

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

The unvalidated attainment of those Year 6 pupils who took the National Curriculum tests in 2011 was lower than in previous years. The proportion that attained the average level in both English and mathematics was significantly below the national average. Their progress, since joining the school, had been too slow.

Inspection evidence and the school's more accurate information about progress and attainment indicate that pupils' achievement is improving steadily. In lessons, pupils are generally making better progress because the activities that teachers plan are more closely suited to their needs and abilities. However, in spite of this gradual improvement, there remain stubborn variations across year groups and in particular subjects. For example, progress and attainment in writing are weak in all year groups. Leaders have implemented a range of initiatives, such as 'The Big Write', to address this. Nevertheless, initiatives are new, and will take time to embed before the full impact can be seen on raising attainment.

The executive headteacher and associate headteacher are experienced and set high expectations. They have been quick to introduce robust systems for tracking pupils'

progress based on regular assessment in English, mathematics and science. This information provides school staff with a more reliable picture of achievement at class, year group and whole-school levels. It also enables leaders to monitor more closely the impact of any strategies that are put in place to support pupils who are underachieving. Some other leaders are slowly beginning to use this information to support their routine monitoring of standards. However, currently, much of the responsibility for monitoring rests solely on the executive headteacher and the associate headteacher, supported by external partners.

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

- raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

Overall, the quality of teaching has continued to improve steadily. However, the rate of improvement has slowed slightly since the previous monitoring inspection as a result of high staff turnover. Consequently, whilst teaching is improving quickly in some year groups, it remains weak or inconsistent in others. The executive headteacher has taken decisive action to strengthen existing teams of teachers and support staff. Timely appointments mean that most classes will have permanent teachers from January.

The executive headteacher and associate headteacher have used information from the monitoring of teaching to inform strategic decisions about future staffing structures. The impact of their feedback to teachers, underpinned by well-focused training, can be seen in lessons. Most teachers have succeeded in improving aspects of their everyday practice. For example, teachers are beginning to use well-planned plenaries routinely to check pupils' learning. Generally, teachers are becoming more confident. Some use imaginative strategies to bring the learning to life. In a science lesson, for example, pupils gasped in amazement when the teacher used sleight of hand and red glitter to demonstrate how germs spread through sneezing or when shaking hands. In general, pupils are eager to learn and engage enthusiastically with work. Occasionally, they become restless when the focus for activities is unclear.

In most lessons work is planned for pupils of different abilities, although sometimes teachers rely too heavily on different worksheets. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics which they understand. However, whilst some are reviewed regularly, others go unchecked or are not sufficiently time limited. In the best lessons, pupils are involved in assessing their own or other pupils' work. However, the use of success criteria for learning is still generally weak. Success criteria are noted in planning but are only occasionally revisited during lessons. Often they are too general. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about what skills or understanding they need to demonstrate if they are to achieve their targets.

The use of talk is improving quickly; often pupils talk in pairs or small groups and this gives them time to formulate good responses to their teachers' questions.

Sometimes the range of strategies for organising class discussion is limited. For example, overly-lengthy question and answer sessions or recaps of prior learning prevent pupils from beginning the new learning that is planned. Marking is regular in all year groups, but varies in quality. Most books now contain written comments that help pupils to improve their work. Some marking refers to the pupils' targets or grade criteria, although this is less frequent. Moreover, pupils do not always have planned opportunities to revisit and correct their work. However, this is improving as a result of the school's system of 'even better if' comments. Year 6 pupils said that they revisited their 'EBIs' each Friday and used this time to improve their writing.

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by April 2012 – satisfactory.

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

The new chair of governors is well informed and has a clear vision for where the school needs to improve most urgently. She and the vice-chair of governors meet fortnightly with senior leaders and the local authority representative to review the progress made by the school. They receive detailed information from the executive headteacher. This enables them to challenge the school about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, currently, they do not ask for a summative evaluation of the progress that has been made against the key areas for improvement. Although there are vacancies, new appointments and a review of committee structures have strengthened the governing body. Recent training has been focused on improving its capacity further. This has included a session that examined school and national attainment and progress information and ways of challenging leaders as 'critical friends'.

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

- improve the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that it challenges and hold senior leaders to account for pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching in the school – satisfactory.

### **External support**

The school makes effective use of external support. Teachers and leaders from partner schools have helped staff to moderate assessments and to develop their leadership capacity. This is beginning to have a discernible impact, although some leaders have found the work challenging and leadership capacity, beyond the executive headteacher and associate headteacher, remains fragile.

Support from local authority advisers has been focused wisely on improving literacy and numeracy. It has been most useful when highly practical, such as helping to plan staff training or modelling good practice. The local authority representative ensures that external support is proportionate and flexible. Information from a local authority review of teaching enabled the new senior leadership team to gain an

accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in provision. Whilst stubborn weaknesses remain in some year groups, there is steady improvement overall.