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12 January 2012

Ms Diane Lawry  
The Executive Headteacher  
Woodcroft Primary School  
37 Woodcroft Lane  
Waterlooville  
Hampshire  
PO8 9QD

Dear Ms Lawry

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Woodcroft Primary School**

Following my visit with Julie Sackett, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 January 2012, 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 July 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.

One newly qualified teacher 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 Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2011

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, levels are at least in line with national averages by:
  - providing a curriculum that is tailored to the needs and interests of pupils and includes more opportunities, across the curriculum, for pupils to write
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and setting more challenging targets
  - making better use of data and assessment information to help drive and embed improvements.
- Increase the proportion of teaching and learning that is good or better by ensuring that:
  - when planning lessons, teachers take full account of pupils' prior learning and different abilities
  - lesson plans include a clearly identified progression of skills, especially for the more-able
  - teaching and support staff are well informed about how best to meet the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - teachers assess pupils' progress during the course of lessons and amend their teaching accordingly to maintain a good pace of learning
  - lessons include a good range of visual clues and a stronger emphasis on new and unfamiliar vocabulary
  - all lessons are taught in a meaningful and purposeful context.
- Raising levels of attendance so they are at least in line with the national average by:
  - working more closely with parents and carers to help them understand the impact that unnecessary absence has on the education and well-being of their children.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils and the extent to which they feel safe in school by:
  - ensuring staff respond quickly and effectively to pupils' concerns and anxieties in lessons and around the school site
  - following up issues and the extent to which they have been successfully resolved
  - reviewing the behaviour log at regular intervals to identify any patterns of behaviour that require more rigorous intervention and support
  - ensuring that all pupils know what to do when they feel unable to resolve disputes for themselves, and increasing their confidence in staff to help when needed
  - raising the confidence of parents and carers about the extent to which the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour.
- Develop leadership and management across the school by ensuring that:

- action and improvement plans reflect the school's priorities and include measurable success criteria and a clear focus on outcomes for learners
- levels of attainment and the progress made by different groups of pupils are tracked and reported on by leaders and managers in their areas of responsibility
- leaders, managers and staff are held to account for the progress made by pupils
- ensuring that all statutory requirements are met including evaluating the impact of the school's policy for equality of opportunity and communicating findings to staff, parents, carers and the Interim Executive Board
- ensuring that evaluations are rooted in secure evidence and provide precise information about the impact of the school's work on different groups of pupils.

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

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 January 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives from the local authority and groups of pupils.

#### **Context**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term. Leadership is currently being provided by a temporary executive headteacher, who is the headteacher of Mill Hill Primary School in Waterloo; she typically spends around half of the week at Woodcroft. In December the school formally joined Mill Hill in a federation. The interim executive board, which was put in place last year to undertake the duties of Woodcroft's governing body, was replaced by a new governing body for the federation. Governors are currently advertising for a permanent executive headteacher for the federation. The deputy headteacher of another local school has also been seconded to Woodcroft as the Acting Headteacher; he was absent at the time of the inspection.

Almost all of the teaching staff also left at the end of the summer term. The vacancies were successfully filled and the school has a full complement of staff.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Levels of attainment in all subjects are very low because pupils made too little progress when they were younger and have a lot of catching up to do. Attainment is rising because pupils made better progress last term, but many are still a long way from national average levels of attainment in their reading, writing and mathematics. A number of pupils, including many with special educational needs, made rapid gains in their reading abilities last term as a result of a range of additional support.

Many pupils have poor speaking and listening skills and do not speak confidently. Many also lose concentration quickly or struggle to make progress in their work without additional adult help.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, levels are at least in line with national averages – satisfactory.

## **The quality of teaching**

Teaching is improving. Almost all teaching is now at least satisfactory and a significant minority is good. Lessons are purposeful and teachers have increasingly higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and constructive. Pupils now enjoy lessons more. Some useful early work has been done to improve provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are skilled and play a valuable role in supporting pupils' learning.

Less-effectively-taught lessons typically have one or more of the following weaknesses.

- Lesson activities are not selected carefully enough to ensure that they enable pupils to learn what the teacher is trying to teach.
- The teacher does not use the objectives of the lesson to check pupils' learning as the lesson proceeds.
- Lesson activities are too hard or too easy for some pupils.
- Lesson activities go on for too long, so that the pace of the lesson slows and time is wasted.
- The end of the lesson is rushed, with little time to check or consolidate what pupils have learned.

Good work has been done to improve the way in which younger pupils learn to link letters and sounds. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from useful training in this area and are now adopting a consistent and effective approach across the school.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- increase the proportion of teaching or learning that is good or better – satisfactory.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour has improved. Pupils are typically polite, positive and happy in school. The number excluded from school has fallen significantly. The vast majority of pupils now behave appropriately, although the behaviour of a few around the school can sometimes be noisy and rowdy. Many pupils find it difficult to concentrate in lessons and inattention can be a significant barrier to learning, although this rarely develops into more significant misbehaviour.

Adults set clear and high expectations for pupils' conduct and the recently introduced behaviour policy and guidelines have helped to support improvements in behaviour. They are generally followed consistently by staff, although pupils point to some inconsistencies between classroom and lunchtime staff. There is a clear system of sanctions, but also a popular system of rewards. Incidents of misbehaviour are monitored carefully and numbers have fallen over the past term.

Pupils generally feel safe and secure, although some also point to the poor behaviour of a few pupils

Effective strategies are being used to improve attendance and staff are working closely with families where absence is a particular concern. Attendance and punctuality improved last term, although attendance was better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improving the behaviour of pupils and the extent to which they feel safe in school – satisfactory
- raising levels of attendance so that they are at least in line with national averages – satisfactory.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The current, temporary arrangements for the school's leadership are working well. Staff, pupils, parents and carers all recognise and appreciate the school's recent improvements. The executive headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and knows what she needs to do to bring Woodcroft out of special measures. She is rightly focusing in particular on improving the quality of teaching. She has high expectations of staff and has very clearly demonstrated that she is willing to take determined action to improve practice. The Acting Headteacher was absent during the inspection, but pupils, staff, parents and carers all pointed to the significant impact that he is having on the school. Despite the school's difficulties, and the fact that the arrangements for its senior leadership are currently only temporary, staff morale is good.

Valuable work is being done to develop leadership and management across the school and to build a wider leadership team. A range of factors, including the need for middle leaders to focus primarily on their own classes last term and the need to set up many new school systems, has limited opportunities for middle leaders to become involved in monitoring the school's work.

The transition from Woodcroft's interim executive board to the federation's new governing body is being managed well. Almost all of the members have now been appointed. Systems and structures are being put in place and useful training is being provided. The new governing body has an appropriate focus on ensuring that all statutory requirements are being met.

Systems for collecting and analysing data about pupils' progress have improved, although they do not yet provide a clear analysis of the progress made by different groups of pupils. Senior leaders verify the accuracy of the data well by checking it against pupils' work and achievement in lessons. Senior leaders are making use of the data to hold teachers more accountable for the progress that the pupils in their classes are making.

Some useful, early work has been done to develop the curriculum. Although leaders recognise that there is more to do, these changes are already helping to ensure that pupils are more interested in lessons and able to develop skills and understanding more securely over time. However, curriculum and lesson planning is typically stronger in English and mathematics than it is in other subjects.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- develop leadership and management across the school – satisfactory.

### **External support**

The local authority's statement of action and plan for the school were judged to fulfil requirements when they were evaluated by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in September. School and local authority staff are working to a common action plan, which is a clear and useful document. It clearly distinguishes the actions that the school and local authority officers will each take, and it identifies regular targets. The local authority is providing a wide range of useful support, which is valued, appreciated by school staff and increasingly supporting the drive to raise pupils' achievement. Progress is also being monitored regularly and carefully. Partnership work with the federation's other primary school is developing well and staff from Mill Hill and another local primary school have provided a range of support for the school.