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13 January 2012

Mr I Cording
The Headteacher
Whitleigh Community Primary School
Lancaster Gardens
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Dear Mr Cording

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Whitleigh Community Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to your Chair of Governors, Campus Director, staff and pupils who gave of their time to meet with me.

Since the previous inspection the school's governing body has been restructured to allow a sharper focus on school improvement. It is now a management committee within the federation of schools that is the Woodview Learning Community.

As a result of the inspection on 1 and 2 December 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school has made good progress in providing improved opportunities for all pupils to develop their writing skills throughout the curriculum. Pupils receive daily focused teaching to develop and practise their phonics and literacy skills. In addition, regular, designated time is provided for pupils to practise their handwriting skills and to write at length. These strategies, combined with the careful tracking of pupils'

January 2012



progress, ensure that teaching is always focused on what pupils need to do next to improve their work. Although pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 was low, the rigorous monitoring of pupils' work shows the majority of pupils make good progress in acquiring their core skills in English and mathematics. Current assessment data also show the school is in a strong position to achieve its aspirational targets for 2012 which will bring pupils' attainment in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Planning is detailed and appropriately focused on individual pupils' learning needs and teachers work well together in teams to ensure consistency of approach. Strategies to improve reading, and now writing, have been very successfully introduced, although it is too early yet to see the impact on pupils' writing. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and the challenges teachers set them. Areas for improvement are identified through regular marking and shared regularly with pupils who are then encouraged to reflect on their work so that they know what to do next to improve. The school is further aware of the need to develop opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their learning in lessons.

Teaching assistants are deployed well throughout the school. They appreciate the support they receive within school and are regularly trained and up-dated to carry out their roles effectively in lessons. They provide good, inclusive support to individual pupils and groups. As a result, pupils identified with special educational needs and or disabilities make good progress, relative to their starting points, because their work and targets are carefully planned and their progress is regularly monitored.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning and the good progress pupils make. They are polite to staff and visitors. In lessons pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and say they enjoy school and appreciate the efforts teachers take to make learning fun. For example, in a literacy lesson observed by the inspector, the teacher dressed up as a character from a book in order to engage and motivate pupils in learning. Pupils also show respect for one another, in lessons and at other times around the school. They are given regular opportunities to work together in lessons and reflect on what they are learning. Disruptive incidents seldom occur. Inappropriate behaviour, when it does take place, is quickly and effectively dealt with by teachers.

All adults are appropriately trained and regularly updated in the procedures for safeguarding pupils and the school is exceptionally vigilant in keeping records and so cares and provides very well for the safety of pupils.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The headteacher enjoys the full confidence of stakeholders and possesses a very secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. He is single minded in his determination to drive through the actions necessary to secure lasting improvements to pupil outcomes. He is demonstrating an ambitious vision for the school and holds high expectations for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. To this end he has successfully gathered around him a highly motivated team of senior leaders and teachers who share a commitment to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. For example, the curriculum has now been reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance of subjects is now taught, whilst maintaining a focus on developing pupils' core literacy and numeracy skills. There is no complacency within the school and appropriate plans are in place to further lift pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.

Systems to monitor the work of the school are embedded and provide regular information to senior leaders on pupils' progress. Self-evaluation is accurate and used effectively in setting challenging targets. Similarly, outcomes from lesson observations are followed through and if necessary incorporated into the performance management target setting process.

The school works closely with the local authority and benefits from additional resources and expertise provided by the school improvement team. The recent changes to the structure of the governing body have resulted in a strengthening of the governing body's knowledge and ability to hold the school effectively to account. As a result, the school's capacity for further improvement is strengthening as all areas of leadership within the school are now securely focused on raising the attainment of pupils.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2010.

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - providing extended writing opportunities for more capable pupils
 - setting more precise targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - updating the literacy policy to provide clearer guidance on improving pupils' handwriting.
- Extend curriculum planning to ensure suitable coverage of science, history and geography and to make sure that the skills and knowledge that pupils acquire build on what they already know.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the governing body's knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate the school's performance
 - sharpening systems for reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.