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27 January 2012

Mrs N Brogan
Headteacher
Woodland Community Primary School
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Lancashire
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Dear Mrs Brogan

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Woodland Community Primary School

Following my visit with Doreen Davenport, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 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 Rochdale.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

January 2012



Annex

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress securely and rapidly by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and ensuring the quality of teaching is at least consistently good
 - making sure that teaching challenges pupils of all abilities appropriately
 - making sure that teaching has a sharp focus on its impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Improve behaviour so that it is at least satisfactory by making sure that teaching is consistent in stimulating pupils' interest and application.
- Improve pupils' prospects for their future success and economic well-being so that they are at least satisfactory by:
 - maintaining and embedding the recent improvements in attendance
 - improving pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Improve the effectiveness with which leaders and managers embed ambition and drive the school forward so that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory by:
 - making sure that evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and leads to more rigorous tackling of shortcomings
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning with more rigour
 - making sure that forward planning provides the school with clear direction and a sharp concentration on priorities to bring about the rapid improvement that is necessary
 - making governance more effective in holding the school rigorously to account.



Special measures: monitoring inspection of Woodland Community Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 January 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, pupils, and representatives of the governing body and of the local authority. They observed 16 lessons or part lessons and heard a number of pupils read. During this inspection, inspectors looked in detail at pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics. They examined pupils' books, reading records, the school's data on reading and mathematics, teachers' planning and the systems for teaching reading and mathematics, and spoke to pupils in lessons.

Inspectors also scrutinised the school's records for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff and checked that the school is meeting statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in September 2011, there have been significant changes in staffing. An additional permanent deputy headteacher has been appointed so the school now has two. Both deputies teach full time: one in Key Stage 1 and the other in Key Stage 2. In addition, the senior leadership team has been restructured to include the two deputies, a new internally appointed manager for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and leaders of upper and lower Key Stage 2. Two managers each have separate responsibility for leading on reading and writing and mathematics. Six teachers left the school at the end of the autumn term; some were permanent appointments and others were on temporary contracts. Teaching assistant posts have also been restructured due to staff leaving and new appointments being made.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain very low across all parts of the school except in the Reception class where pupils are learning to read well and are acquiring good letter sound knowledge. Already, most pupils in the Reception classes are reading a range of vowel sounds such as 'ai, oa, igh, ie, ow and ur' and using this knowledge to good effect to read unseen texts and write simple sentences. In contrast, some older pupils in the school still struggle with these letter sounds in their reading and writing.

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the school has completed a full assessment of pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics using commercial, standardised tests and it now has a detailed baseline from which to measure pupils' progress. The results are stark. In Years 1 to 6, 68% of pupils have reading ages below their birthday age; the vast majority of these are a year or more below and a significant proportion are two or more years below. Fifty-two per cent of pupils have standardised scores in mathematics that are considerably below average. These results confirm the depth of weakness in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skill. A detailed analysis of the results to identify which gaps in pupils'



knowledge are holding back their progress has yet to be undertaken. School leaders and governors know that this is a crucial next step in order to ensure that the teaching tackles these areas. Some year groups have particularly weak results; for example, Year 3 where nearly three quarters of pupils have particularly low scores.

Improvements in teaching are also revealing gaps in pupils' knowledge; for example, in their understanding that in '37' the 3 represents 3 tens and the 7 represents 7 ones. In a Year 4 lesson, no child could explain what the word 'unit' meant in the phrase 'tens and units', despite hearing the phrase almost every day for several years. Although they had frequently practised splitting (partitioning) 2 digit numbers, for example 30 and 7, they had not been taught to think about the digits also as 3 sets of ten and 7 ones. Consequently, when the teacher tried to teach vertical addition of two digit numbers, which required the swapping (exchange) of units for tens, the pupils did not understand. It became apparent that the pupils had rarely, if ever, used base ten materials to illustrate the relationship between the digits in our decimal system. By the second day of the inspection, the teacher had produced individual HTU place mats and found a set of base 10 materials and was able to teach these critical concepts from scratch. As a result of this rapid and outstanding intervention, pupils made obvious and rapid gains in their understanding within the lesson. However, the lesson merely served to highlight further historic weaknesses across the school's mathematics provision. Pupils' mathematics books show that there is a greater range of mathematics being taught as teachers now have a whole school scheme to follow; the scheme is providing clearer continuity across year groups and ensuring that topics are being covered. The work in pupils' books is presented more neatly and more consistently as a result of the introduction of a whole school presentation policy.

New reading books and new phonics (letter sounds) resources have been purchased. Phonics are now taught every day across both Key Stage One and Lower Key Stage 2; pupils are grouped according to their stage of development. Phonics are also taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These initiatives are having a good impact but in both key stages, currently, pupils have too few opportunities to read books and practise their skills. Books are changed too infrequently. In addition, not all teachers have routinely taken full responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress and there is a lack of whole school systems to record progress. There is not a strong reading culture in the school and few pupils routinely bring their reading books to school. The school's own 'book banding' scheme is too wide and imprecise to support teachers trying to guide pupils' reading. The teachers know this and discussed this with inspectors. Senior leaders are also aware of the issues and the teaching and management of reading is under review across the school. All classes have a guided reading session each day, but it is not always used as effectively as it could be to drive up standards. Too often, the time is used to complete low level writing tasks rather than reading more challenging texts. The reading tests results reveal that in each class there is a small number of pupils who have above or well above average reading ages and who are capable of attaining higher levels in the national tests. Currently, the school's reading provision does not sufficiently challenge these pupils.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress securely and rapidly – inadequate



- Improve pupils' prospects for their future success and economic well-being so that they are at least satisfactory by improving pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT – inadequate

The quality of teaching

The changes and recent appointments to the teaching staff have had a positive impact. The profile of teaching is much improved and teaching was inadequate in fewer observed lessons during this inspection, compared to the previous visit. Most teaching observed was satisfactory but good and outstanding teaching was also seen. Improved teaching is resulting in most pupils making satisfactory progress in lessons now, but this is not sufficient to eradicate the substantial gaps in their knowledge and understanding. There is a greater consistency in lesson planning and in class routines. There was no evidence of time slippage or wasted time as there was at the previous inspection. Improvements in pupils' behaviour are impacting positively on their achievement in lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.

Teaching assistants too often over direct the pupils with whom they work. Several classes have three or four additional adults supporting and, in some cases, pupils become too reliant on the support staff to read or write for them and they are not challenged enough to work independently. Teaching assistants sometimes spend overlong periods of time re-teaching at the table with their group, so that the pupils have an extended input and very little time to do any work.

In lessons generally, there is too much teacher talk and too little time for pupils to work independently.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was good. Inspectors observed no poor behaviour. Pupils are engaging well with the higher demands being placed upon them in lessons and are responding accordingly. They are rising to the challenges of the new behaviour policy, which is being implemented consistently and they are keen to learn. Attendance has improved. The school's latest annual figure of 93.4% attendance was higher than the figure for the previous three years. The figure for autumn 2011, 94.3%, is a further improvement. There are clear procedures in place to promote good attendance and punctuality with parents.

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

- Improve behaviour so that it is at least satisfactory by making sure that teaching is consistent in stimulating pupils' interest and application – satisfactory
- Improve pupils' prospects for their future success and economic well-being by maintaining and embedding the recent improvements in attendance – satisfactory



The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Since the previous monitoring inspection, the headteacher, governors and local authority have moved rapidly and effectively to tackle serious staffing issues and the weak quality of teaching which were holding back the school's progress. The new appointments to the senior leadership team are already proving to be effective. The school now has a 'critical mass' of committed staff working with a common sense of purpose and of urgency. The new senior leadership team is very clear about the challenge facing the school and the priorities that the leaders have to make. The impact of their early work is evident in the improved profile of teaching in the school, in the schedule of monitoring that is already underway and the team spirit evident in discussions with staff. The school has turned a corner and is in a much better position than it was at the previous inspection. Leaders and governors are responding rapidly to the challenges they face. There remains much to be done but their planning is clear and it focuses on the right issues. Monitoring of teaching is centre stage. Much support for teaching has been provided by external consultants and leading teachers. However, the senior leadership team now has to steer the school itself to achieve the standards and quality of teaching it is seeking.

Members of the governing body have been extremely effective in fulfilling their roles and supporting the headteacher through the management of some difficult staffing issues. Governors are very capable and ask pertinent and reflective questions. They understand exactly what needs to be done to improve the school.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Improve the effectiveness with which leaders and managers embed ambition and drive the school forward so that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory – satisfactory

External support

The local authority has provided very good and timely support for the headteacher and governors since the previous monitoring inspection, especially in respect of staffing issues. The local authority officers continue to provide good external evaluation of the school's position.

