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28 March 2012

Mrs C Moran
The Headteacher
Woodfield Primary School
Taunton Avenue
Plymouth
PL5 4HW

Dear Mrs Moran

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour: monitoring inspection of Woodfield Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 March 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please convey my gratitude to the members of staff and pupils who met with me as well as to the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and to the local authority senior adviser who met me at short notice.

There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, you took up your appointment in September 2011. The deputy headteacher is currently on maternity leave and a teacher was seconded from another local school in February 2012 in order to ensure that senior leadership was not adversely affected. Several governors have left the governing body and new governors have been appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 19 October 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 satisfactory progress in making improvements and the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In the Year 6 national tests in 2011, pupils' attainment showed some improvement on 2009, the last year in which pupils in this school took these tests. However, attainment was well below average and, although progress in English and mathematics showed some improvement, it was inadequate overall for those who left the school last year. Pupils' achievement is now improving as a result of higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, a sharper focus on tracking their progress and concerted action to improve the quality of teaching. The school's data and

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inspection evidence indicate that current Year 6 pupils are on track to make better progress by the summer than those leaving last year. Year 2 pupils are also set to do better than those in this year group in 2010/11. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment has largely been eliminated in Years 1 and 2. Although the gap is narrowing, boys' attainment in Years 3 to 6 continues to lag behind that of the girls. Teachers' higher expectations have a positive impact on the achievement of higher-attaining pupils, although instances were observed on this inspection where some of these pupils were not fully challenged. It is recognised that there is more to do before higher-attaining pupils are fully confident in challenging themselves to do better.

The quality of teaching

Improving the quality of teaching has rightly been a high priority since September 2011 in order to improve the progress of all pupils. You have conducted classroom observations that result in detailed comments with clearly identified strengths and areas for development. This has been complemented well by scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Teachers have been given the opportunity to observe each others' teaching and share practice, particularly in engaging boys more fully in their learning. Approaches to marking have been revised and pupils receive clear feedback on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Those interviewed value and understand the different colours used in marking their work. Through regular meetings to review progress, teachers are now held to account more effectively for the progress of their pupils and underachievement is identified at an early stage so that appropriate action can be taken.

The school's data indicate that teaching is improving and some good teaching was observed during this inspection. Enthusiastic teachers were keen that their pupils should do as well as they could and frequently referred to features of better work to which pupils were encouraged to aspire. Pupils, including almost all boys, responded well to approaches to engage their interest, for example through the use of bean bags to generate effective 'openers' and connectives in a Year 6 class. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed opportunities to 'popcorn' their ideas. Where pupils' understanding was not explored and consolidated sufficiently at the start of one lesson, pupils' progress slowed. However, the teacher identified the problem and took suitable action.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour was judged good in the previous inspection and this has been sustained well. Good behaviour was observed when pupils arrived at school, in lessons and around the site. Pupils interviewed reported that behaviour was good and that the school quickly dealt with any problems. New approaches to promoting good behaviour have been successfully developed and pupils appreciate the system of rewards, including the 'good to be green' approach. The school's actions to improve attendance are having a positive impact. Parents and carers now receive a letter each term where their children's attendance is rated as green, amber or red. Those

where there are concerns are invited to discuss any difficulties. Rewards for classes with the highest attendance are valued by pupils and persistent absence is reducing.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The school is showing a strengthening capacity to sustain further improvement. You show great determination in addressing the school's weaknesses and in ensuring that pupils make accelerated progress. You wisely sought the support of the local authority in carrying out a detailed review in October 2011 to assist in prioritising action. A detailed improvement plan was drawn up and progress with this has been rigorously checked. Much energy has rightly been focused on securing the accuracy of teachers' assessment to underpin actions for improvement. It was quickly identified that senior and middle leadership in the school required strengthening. The numeracy subject leader has had support and guidance from local authority consultants as well as from colleagues in local schools. The acting deputy headteacher brings expertise in literacy and special educational needs and plans for the development of these aspects of the school are currently being developed. The governing body is better informed by the headteacher and other staff about improvements in the school, as well as by governors' developing visits to the school to gain first-hand evidence. The governing body is thus now better placed to ask appropriate questions of the school's leadership.

The local authority's support has been good. The school has benefited from the review and the involvement of local authority senior staff and consultants in planning and implementing necessary improvements. The local authority has also facilitated support from staff in other local schools.

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

Grahame Sherfield
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve the progress of groups of boys by ensuring that:
 - there is a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity in each lesson
 - activities are successful in motivating pupils to work hard.
- Accelerate the progress of potentially higher-attaining pupils by:
 - ensuring they are enabled to make good use of all the time in lessons clearly identifying what different groups of pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each lesson
 - helping pupils gain the confidence to challenge themselves.
- Improve attendance by working with the families of pupils with high levels of absence.