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17 October 2012

Ms Hilary Harris
Executive Headteacher
Woodstock School
Rectory Gardens
Bristol
BS10 7AH

Dear Ms Harris

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Woodstock School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 October 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority.

Following the previous inspection, the local authority withdrew financial delegation from the school and is now taking full responsibility for budget and personnel issues. In September 2012, the headteacher, having been seconded to be the acting executive headteacher of the Woodway Federation, returned to her post at Woodstock. The deputy headteacher also returned to her former post, having been the acting headteacher during the headteacher's secondment. Two teachers, including the assistant headteacher, resigned from their posts in August 2012. Interviews for the vacant posts are due to take place later this term.

As a result of the inspection on 7–8 March 2012, 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Joint lesson observations with local authority staff and leading practitioners have ensured that the senior staff have an accurate picture of what good teaching and learning look like. Subject leaders are not yet involved in monitoring teaching and progress in their own subjects, although this is planned for later this year. Leaders have identified good practice in the school and are sharing this with all staff through regular training sessions. The improved quality of monitoring by senior leaders, accompanied by individualised training where required, has resulted in an improved

quality of teaching. No inadequate teaching was observed during this visit and in some lessons pupils made good progress. Within lessons, there is generally skilful teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, and better practice in ensuring that individual and group activities match the needs and capabilities of all the pupils. However, the school still has some way to go to ensure that all teaching is at least good. In lessons, there is often a lack of balance between the learning that is directed by the teacher and that which is initiated by pupils. As a result, pupils sometimes lose their concentration and are less motivated than they could be. This also hampers them in becoming fully independent as learners. The quality of teachers' marking is still too variable in quality, with too few indications of how pupils can make improvements to their work.

All pupils, despite their low starting points and emotional difficulties, are making progress in their work. Improved progress was observed in English and mathematics in particular, but in all subjects there is not enough consistency in the efforts made to improve pupils' literacy skills. Teachers often miss opportunities to encourage pupils to write about what they have learnt. Pupils have individual learning targets that are displayed in the classrooms, but these are often too vague to be useful and are infrequently referred to in lessons. As a result, pupils often do not know or fully understand their own targets.

The school's actions have improved achievement in mathematics. The school's data show that progress in mathematics is now at least as fast as in other subjects. An advanced skills teacher has worked with teachers regularly to improve their subject knowledge, model best practice and to give teachers guidance and tips on how to improve their lessons. The subject leader has made visits to a local secondary school to observe high-quality teaching there. These actions have improved the quality of teaching and learning back in Woodstock.

With the advice and assistance of the local authority, the school has analysed and reconfigured its curriculum planning to ensure that there is a suitable balance between the different subjects within the topic themes. Curriculum maps now show that there is a clearer focus on English, mathematics and science within the timetable. The new curriculum has not been in place long enough for the impact of its developments to be measured, but a review is planned for later this year to evaluate the success of the work.

The local authority's statement of action fulfils requirements. The support offered by the local authority is very good and is helping to drive sustainable improvement. Senior staff and the governing body have ambition and vision for the school. Together with the local authority, they have accurately identified and prioritised their development needs and are working determinedly to ensure that the improvements that they have introduced will ultimately be reflected in improved achievement. However, progress has been slowed by not having the headteacher in place full time until September 2012.

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

Mick Megee

Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2012

- By September 2012, improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so all pupils make good progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is secure
 - teachers' planning in mathematics identifies a wide range of experiences that are to be taught
 - teachers make better use of the information they have about pupils so that work is consistently matched well to the needs of individuals
 - marking enables pupils to have a clear understanding of what they have to do to improve.

- By September 2012, improve the management and organisation of topic work by ensuring that:
 - planning for topic work is more robust so that all pupils have a consistently wide range and depth to their experiences
 - subject leaders monitor the contribution topic work makes to pupils' progress.