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18 December 2012

Mr M Alcock
Headteacher
Woodthorne Primary School
Woodthorne Road South
Tettenhall
Wolverhampton
WV6 8XL

Dear Mr Alcock

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Woodthorne Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. The school's action plan was evaluated as were other documents including tracking information on pupil achievement.

Context

Since the inspection the Key Stage 2 coordinator has been appointed as deputy headteacher and mathematics coordinator. From January 2013 she will also take over responsibility for special educational needs as the special educational needs coordinator is stepping down. The Key Stage 1 coordinator has very recently taken on coordination of literacy, a post previously shared with the former Key Stage 2 coordinator.

Main findings

The headteacher has responded swiftly to the inspection by restructuring the senior leadership team and producing an action plan with the newly appointed deputy headteacher to address the identified issues. Teachers are now required to identify literacy opportunities in the lessons plans of other subjects. Whole school training of 'big write' is scheduled for January.

A new marking policy has been introduced which is being consistently implemented by teachers following monitoring by senior leaders. Pupils spoken to during the visit were highly positive about the changes including 'gap tasks', peer and self-marking. The deployment of teaching assistants is now focused on pupils at risk of not making sufficient progress, whatever their current level. The impact of specific interventions is being tracked regularly, as is achievement of different groups.

The Governing Body has enhanced its link roles, especially with regard to literacy and communications with parent. The Chair has taken on the special educational needs link role. A regular governor newsletter is planned. Parents are now being informed more routinely on matters such as the action plan, pupil targets and plans for 'big write.'

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- ensure that tracking information on the progress of different groups of pupils shows clearly whether they are closing the attainment gaps with their peers and with all pupils nationally
- set challenging but achievable targets for the percentage of pupils to achieve the highest possible level in writing at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2
- amend the action plan to indicate who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating each action and set measurable targets with quantifiable outcomes for pupil achievement in writing

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority is providing additional support for the school. It has plans in place to link with a local school judged as good and to mentor the newly appointed deputy headteacher. It is providing additional consultancy support for special educational needs and is supporting the school as part of a cluster of local schools with similar issues around pupil progress in literacy.

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I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wolverhampton.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector