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2 July 2013

Sally Bloomer  
Woodside Community School and Children's Centre  
Highgate Road  
Woodside  
Dudley  
DY2 0SN

Dear Mrs Bloomer

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodside Community School and Children's Centre**

Following my visit to your school on 1 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. The school action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the latest information about pupils' progress, feedback to teachers following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work. During the visit, you and your deputy headteacher joined me on brief visits to classes.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, one member of the senior leadership team has resigned and will be leaving at the end of this term. A new teacher has been appointed for September. Four new governors have been appointed. One vacancy has arisen for a local authority governor.

### **Main findings**

In a short space of time as headteacher you have quickly started to lead improvement across the school. With the new deputy headteacher you have responded effectively and rapidly to the issues identified in the last inspection. You both have a sense of urgency and a determination to succeed. Your school improvement plan addresses all the key areas and includes suitable actions to improve the quality of teaching and the work of senior leaders. The plan does have appropriate milestones but does not always have enough interim success measures to help you to check progress against the milestones.

You have taken effective actions to ensure that teacher assessment is accurate across the school. Having established a secure baseline for pupils' achievement, you have introduced a new system to track pupils' progress. Pupil progress meetings have taken place and are planned regularly. Teachers are now clear about what is expected of them and how they will be held accountable for pupils' achievement. You regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' work. Your feedback identifies successes and areas for development. Some improvements in teachers' marking can be seen. You are beginning to develop a system for judging the quality of teaching based on pupils' learning and progress over time, not solely on lesson observations. You have made links with a Teaching School and have enrolled two teachers on the improving teacher programmes for September.

The school's records show that too few pupils are making good or better progress in writing and mathematics across the school. Your monitoring files highlight that this is because the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and systems to check pupils' progress have not been clear enough in the past. The improvements you have made to teacher assessments, along with the new tracking system, means that you are in a stronger position to address this. Staff have benefited from training provided by the local authority for the teaching of phonics. The regular checks you make on pupils' progress show that there is an above average percentage of pupils on track to meet or exceed the expected levels in this year's phonic screening check. This is a significant improvement on last year. Your records also identify that more pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are now making good progress in reading and are closer to national expectations.

Governors have not been involved enough in the development of the school in the past. They now have a much clearer picture of pupils' achievement and have established a programme of regular visits with clear systems for reporting back to the governing body. You have presented information about the progress of different groups of pupils to them in a way that is clear and easy for them to understand. They are attending training to help them to further develop their understanding of achievement data. They are committed to improving the school. Four new members have joined the governing body since the inspection. Named governors are now linked to each of the areas for improvement in the school improvement plan. However, there has been little training for the governing body in the past and they do not yet have an appropriate action plan. An audit of skills is urgently required in order to identify appropriate training and support. I shared the following Ofsted

reports with governors: *Getting to good* (ref 120167) and *School governance: Learning from the best* (ref 100238).



Overall, senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- carry out an audit, with an external partner, of the governing body and identify appropriate training needs
- complete a detailed action plan for governance linked to the school improvement plan
- tackle the inconsistencies that continue in the quality of teaching
- include measurable success criteria in the school improvement plan.

### **External support**

You have received a good level of support and challenge from the local authority for the teaching of early reading and phonics. This has contributed to better rates of progress for pupils in reading. The local authority has helped you to establish the new systems for tracking pupils' achievement and to review performance management arrangements. Further support is planned to help you to improve the quality of teaching. I recommend that the local authority takes urgent action to support governance.

### **To support the school further HMI will:**

- meet with the full governing body on July 23<sup>rd</sup>
- undertake a review of teaching and learning with you and the deputy headteacher in the second half of Autumn term.

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

Yours sincerely

Marilyn Mottram  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**