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19 November 2013

Mr Jonathan Baker  
The Woodlands Community Primary School  
Canning Road  
Glascote  
B77 3JX

Dear Mr Baker

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Woodlands Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 November 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 26 September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- Consider detailed induction planning to strengthen the training of the newly established extended leadership team.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors were unavailable on the day of the visit. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A brief learning walk was undertaken during the visit and various school documents were reviewed.

## **Context**

The school has undergone significant change since the inspection. This includes the following: The resignation of a further 4 members of the teaching staff, all due to leave at Christmas 2013, a new senior leadership team has been organised which includes 4 members either new to the school or their position, from a full complement of 5. Various key school documents have been written, reviewed or replaced. These include the post inspection action plan and the marking policy. The local authority has brokered the support of a Local Leader of Education to help add capacity to the new leadership team and the school has partnered with a nearby school with the intention of establishing a series of staff development sessions.

## **Main findings**

Since September 2013, the school has undergone a significant restructuring of the senior leadership team. This was in response to concerns that the capacity of the wider team needed strengthening. As a consequence a new Deputy Headteacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and two new posts of Assistant Headteacher have been created and filled. The new team meet fortnightly to review school improvement and have established a monitoring plan for lesson observation and work scrutiny. There are however some further changes to come and many in this team are new to their role, if not new to the school.

You have reviewed the marking policy in response to the inspection findings. This is working well. A new policy of 'Go Green and Think Pink' in which pupils get recognition of good work by green ink and a prompt for extra thought and extension in pink is recognised by the pupil as a workable way of extending their efforts. The new leadership team monitor marking by regular checks. In addition to this the school now operates a system where all work is marked quickly but occasional pieces of work are singled out for a 'quality mark' which includes a detailed and in depth of assessment of pupils' progress. It is too soon to see the full impact of this on attainment but the new system is working well.

The school have tried to iron out the inconsistencies in teaching quality seen previously. This has led to improvements in the quality of planning and levels of expectation about what pupils are capable of. The school acknowledge that their focus has been on literacy, especially writing, and that there has been less progress on developing mathematical skills across the curriculum in the last two months. As a result, this, coupled with the need to extend the mathematical skills of the more able pupils, remains a priority.

The post inspection action plan is tightly matched to the areas for improvement. It is ambitious and fit for purpose although it occasionally lacks specific success criteria and has broad intentions rather than detail. For example, one success criterion describes the effectiveness of training for the new leadership team as having 'immediate impact on school' but without a full expectation of what this might be.

Similarly, it is too soon to see much evidence of the evaluation of the new actions has been, even where it is known to be successful.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

It was not possible to meet with governors on this occasion as they had already agreed to a pre-arranged full meeting the following day and could not make the two day commitment. However, governance was recognised as 'providing effective challenge and support' at the last inspection and, as a consequence, the meeting with the governors was deferred until the next monitoring visit.

### **External support**

The school, with the help of the local authority, has brokered the support of a Local Leader in Education to add capacity to the new senior leadership team. Although there are appropriate plans in place this work has yet to start in earnest and it is too new to be precisely tailored to the emerging needs of the new team. As a consequence I have asked you to consider matching this additional capacity to the professional development needs of the newer members of the senior leadership team. There are also plans to extend the sharing of good practice in teaching more widely across school and with a nearby school also. This work has begun and shows a proactive response to the concerns expressed in the initial inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire and Entrust as the contractor providing support on behalf of the local authority.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Morgan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**