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4 March 2014

Mrs Vicki Conway  
Headteacher  
Woodlea Junior School  
Woodlea Road  
Leyland  
Lancashire  
PR25 1JL

Dear Mrs Conway

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodlea Junior School, Lancashire**

Following my visit to your school on 3 March 2014, 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 December 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:

- develop the skills of subject leaders so that they can evaluate the school's performance and provide specific advice to teachers on how to raise achievement within their subjects.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, teacher with responsibility for leading mathematics, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Brief visits were made to lessons. The school's records of the current progress being made by pupils were considered.

## **Context**

Since the recent inspection, one teacher has retired. A teacher and a teaching assistant have resigned their posts. Three teachers are absent from school. A new teacher has been appointed on a permanent basis and is teaching a Year 4 class. Three teachers are employed on a temporary basis to cover those classes where the substantive teachers are absent and to teach booster classes in Year 6.

## **Main findings**

You and your leadership team demonstrate a shared drive and commitment to raising standards while striving to ensure that pupils enjoy school and develop into happy, thoughtful and confident individuals.

In consultation with senior leaders, governors and local authority personnel, you have drawn up an action plan that clearly shows how you intend to tackle the principal areas for improvement identified as a result of the section 5 inspection. A thorough monitoring calendar accompanies the plan; you have been rigorous in establishing arrangements to ensure that the plan is carried through and its impact on pupils' achievement is kept in focus.

Turbulence in staffing over recent months has presented substantial challenges to the school's leaders. There is evidence that pupils in Years 3 and 6 are making accelerated progress, however the progress overall of pupils in Years 4 and 5 is not as strong. Leaders are acutely aware of the need to ensure that their learning does not suffer and have provided support and guidance to new members of staff so that slippage in pupils' progress is minimised.

The roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants have been reconsidered and timetables redrawn to ensure a balance between support for classroom teaching and individual or group intervention for pupils identified as in need of additional help. These new arrangements are kept under review; early indications from pupils' reading tests and writing assessments suggest that pupils are being more effectively supported now.

Leaders, staff and governors accept the inspection findings. Senior leaders are working effectively together and have clear areas of responsibility. Teachers are working hard to meet the raised expectations within the *Teachers Standards* with regard to planning and marking. Teachers are beginning to see the positive impact of their hard work, for instance in the enthusiastic response by pupils to their more detailed marking. The use of 'fix-it' time provides pupils with good opportunities to act on their teachers' feedback and consolidate their learning. Leaders regularly review the quality of teachers' work and provide helpful advice, which they return to during subsequent monitoring activities.

The school's approach to tracking pupils' progress has been strengthened and half termly pupil progress meetings have been introduced so that leaders and teachers can check on the success of their work to boost pupils' achievement. Additional interventions are planned for specific pupils as a result of these meetings. The coordination of provision for pupils

with special educational needs has been strengthened because of the more robust collection of data and insightful scrutiny of the factors that boost or inhibit pupils' progress.

The teaching of writing has been given greater prominence, with more opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. Teachers are paying particular attention to developing pupils' writing stamina. Pupils' work books indicate that they are using more adventurous vocabulary and replying to questions teachers pose in their marking. There are stimulating examples of pupils' writing displayed in some, but not all, classrooms.

The school has taken a sensible approach towards revising its curriculum plans. Teachers take their responsibility for coordinating different subjects seriously and have completed action plans. These vary in quality and it is not always clear how subject leaders advise teachers on their specific subjects.

Through its standards and effectiveness committee, the governing body monitors the implementation of the school's action plan. Governors provide support and challenge to the headteacher in appropriate measure. They are well informed about pupils' progress and have taken difficult decisions relating to teachers' pay progression.

The school's leaders work effectively with the leaders of the neighbouring infant school; this relationship aids transition for pupils and means that staff have a better understanding of skills development within their subjects.

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

### **External support**

The headteacher enlisted the support of the local authority's Monitoring and Intervention Team (MIT) shortly after taking up her post. The MIT adviser has continued to quality assure the work of the school, including by undertaking joint lesson observations and brokering links with another school in order that good practice can be observed. Together with the school improvement adviser, he attends the governors' standards and effectiveness committee. A local leader in education, who is a serving headteacher, provides additional advice. Two local authority consultants have provided training for staff. They have given rapid support to newly-appointed and temporary staff to ensure that no momentum is lost in the school's drive to raise standards. Lancashire Governor Services have provided training for governors on the analysis of achievement data.

The impact of the wide-ranging support provided by the local authority is now being manifested in improved teaching and effective development of leadership across the school. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**