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24 March 2015

Mr Shaun Holland  
Headteacher  
Woolpit Community Primary School  
Heath Road  
Woolpit  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP30 9RU

Dear Mr Holland

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woolpit Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 November 2014. 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:

- make the measures against which the school's work is evaluated more specific so that they show accurately what is expected in terms of teaching and learning in each subject
- continue to improve the wider activities provided for children in the early years to use the new skills they learn in the direct teaching sessions.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the English, mathematics and Early Years Foundation Stage leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We visited all classes together, looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. I also met with the school council to discuss the improvements in behaviour and watched pupils play at lunchtime. I looked at assessment information and evaluated school improvement planning, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, behaviour incident logs and minutes of governing body meetings.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, one part-time teacher has left the school and a replacement teacher has been appointed. A teacher has taken over the leadership of English from you so that you can focus on wider strategic issues. You have created a lunchtime leader position and a lead teaching assistant role. An application has been made for the school to convert to become an academy in collaboration with three other local schools.

## **Main findings**

You, staff and governors have taken rapid and rigorous action to develop the monitoring and management of pupils' behaviour at playtimes. The extent to which this has been successful is evidence of the strong capacity of the new leadership team to bring about improvement. All staff, including teaching assistants and midday supervisors, have worked together to create a new behaviour policy and expectations are now clear to all. Pupils know what sanctions are in place if they should misbehave and all those spoken to say that the new procedures are working well. They say they are confident that no-one is allowed to 'spoil playtimes' any more and that the new equipment you have provided keeps them busy. Behaviour incident logs show a marked reduction in the number of instances of poor behaviour and a midday supervisor who has worked at the school for a number of years remarked that pupils are more respectful and she is happier to come to work because the strategies in place give her good support. You have involved parents in the drive to improve behaviour by establishing a core group to consult with and you have responded to their views that pupils are able to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. These responsibilities have been identified in the new home school agreement you have put in place to which the vast majority of parents have responded positively.

Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning behaviour have also been raised. The mathematics subject leader has drawn well on visits to observe effective practice in other schools. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the higher demands made of them, although they think these could still be increased further in some lessons. In the lessons visited, especially in Years 5 and 6, an atmosphere of calm purpose

underpins learning, pupils are expected to work hard and they understand how to improve their learning. The mathematics leader has also increased the resources available to support pupils to understand new learning better. She has made clear the purpose of discussion in lessons to develop pupils' mathematics vocabulary. There is however, still less confidence in the way pupils discuss their achievements in mathematics compared to English.

You have moved staff to new roles to increase the expertise of the teaching team in the Reception class. Resources have been overhauled and the early years leader has visited other settings to gather ideas to improve provision. Expectations of children's learning have risen and the teaching of core skills has been sharpened. As a result, children are on track for higher levels of attainment this year and their understanding and use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved. The extended provision to engage children in independent learning in wider activities does not reflect the same level of challenge.

Your development plan includes appropriate actions through which you are addressing the key issues identified at the last inspection. You have increased the regularity of monitoring and tightened its focus on the impact of these. All leaders, despite being inexperienced, now have the time and growing expertise to evaluate the quality of provision and pupils' achievement in the subjects they are responsible for. They speak knowledgeably about what needs to improve and the actions they are taking to bring this about. In some instances, the measures by which the success of actions taken will be evaluated are not specific enough to enable the leadership team and governors to evaluate progress precisely.

Governors commissioned an independent review of their work as recommended in the inspection report and found the resulting discussion useful. In response to this they have implemented a monitoring calendar to ensure their visits and analyses give them first-hand knowledge of whether the school is improving quickly enough against the priorities identified. They have also put in place a schedule for subject leaders to keep them informed of plans for development and the impact of the resources used to bring about improvement. They have evaluated the improvements in behaviour through using a range of evidence including visits to classrooms and playtimes, discussions with pupils, parents and midday supervisors and consideration of the incidents of poor behaviour the school has logged. This demonstrates increased rigour in their work and their capacity to build an accurate picture of how well the school is improving.

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 local authority adviser has provided you with support for developing your action plan and for evaluating provision in the Reception class; this has been effective in improving your skills in these key aspects of leadership. The support of the behaviour and attendance adviser has also been effective in identifying strategies for improving behaviour. You have given staff the opportunity to visit other local schools to learn from effective practice. These visits have been well-planned and have quickly enabled staff to improve aspects of provision particularly in mathematics. In moving towards securing academy status, the relationships you are building with the other local schools involved are providing effective opportunities for collaborative staff development.

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

Yours sincerely

Prue Rayner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy