

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus  
Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T: 0121 679 9153  
Direct email: [naik.sandhu@serco.com](mailto:naik.sandhu@serco.com)



10 July 2015

Jeff Conquest  
Headteacher  
Woodland Middle Academy  
Malham Close  
Flitwick  
Bedford  
MK45 1NP

Dear Mr Conquest

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodland Middle School Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 9 July, 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 March 2015. 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:

- ensure there is coherence between the school improvement plan and the governors' action plan and clarify how governors will monitor agreed strategies
- provide opportunities for staff to visit pupils in Years 7 and 8 in an effective secondary school so that teachers can check whether achievement and progress in your school match that of pupils in an all-through secondary school.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I spoke to the school improvement adviser. You joined me on a tour of the school. I visited classrooms,

looked at pupils' work and spoke with them. I read a range of documentation including your new policy to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the school improvement plan. I checked the single central record for newly appointed staff.

## **Context**

Several new teachers, a new coordinator for special education needs and a new assistant headteacher will join the school from September 2015.

## **Main findings**

Soon after the inspection you took swift action to address the issues identified. The pupil premium review and the review of governance were conducted promptly. With the support of governors, you are acting on the findings of these reviews methodically and a range of new strategies are now in place. For example, you are adopting a more personalised approach to address barriers in learning for all pupils in receipt of additional funding. You are developing better system to analyse pupils' performance information and governors are improving their skills in understanding the data on pupils' progress. The links between your school improvement plan and the governors' action plan are not clear enough. It is, therefore, difficult to see how and when governors will monitor the impact of your strategies.

Some actions are already demonstrating impact. Teachers are ensuring that pupils improve their work as a result of marking and assessment. Pupils said that, since the inspection, they feel that teachers are supporting them better and are asking them to check corrections. Teachers also give pupils more time to correct their work through the 'Directed Independent Reflection Time' (DIRT). Your new policy to monitor teaching and learning is comprehensive and shows how your evaluation of teaching is tightly linked to performance management. Due to staff changes, you are rightly planning to introduce the new policy from September 2015. It is, therefore, too early to see its full impact. However, you made a good start this term by checking key elements of good teaching.

Following observations, you provide teacher with clear strengths and areas for improvement. You now have a more holistic view of teaching using a wide range of evidence to reach your conclusions on whether teaching over time is good enough. You need to ensure that clear timescales are set to make all teaching good or better, and that these are adhered to, so that pupils' rate of progress improves quickly across all subjects. A strength of your strategy is the close involvement of subject leaders in monitoring their subjects, jointly with senior leaders, to improve middle leadership.

New initiatives are in place to improve standards in English and mathematics. For example, in Year 5, more curriculum time will be given to mathematics from September 2015 and, in English, you are working with the local feeder lower schools

to improve spelling. You are aware of the need to strengthen the use of numeracy and literacy across all subjects in the curriculum. Some teachers have not had recent experience of comparing the standards achieved by Years 7 and 8 pupils in a secondary schools with those of pupils attending Woodland Middle Academy. Opportunities to share good practice with an effective secondary school should be provided to check whether achievement and progress in your school are as high as they could be across all subjects.

I was able to observe pupils using their speaking, numeracy and social skills as the whole school was involved in a charity event on the day of my visit. This event gave pupils good opportunities to develop their appreciation of the business world. The video extracts of your 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' production, currently being performed for parents and carers, show that pupils who are involved in the performance have high levels of confidence and well-developed oracy skills.

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

### **External support**

Governors have appointed an experienced school improvement partner because they want a critical view of the school's overall effectiveness. You welcome this external challenge and the two reviews conducted by the improvement partner give the school a clear agenda for further improvement. You attended a pupil premium conference and you are now the 'pupil-premium champion' for the school, rightly giving a high priority to raising achievement of this particular group of pupils. The local authority is readily accessible for guidance and support, and two teachers are on the local authority's improving teaching programme. Your links with the local upper schools ensure smooth transition for Year 8 pupils into Year 9.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Central Bedfordshire and the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé  
**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
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- For academies [[CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk)]