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Kate Charles  
Head of School  
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Dear Kate Charles

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodfield Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 16 November 2016, 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 December 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- teachers in Years 1 and 2 plan activities that sufficiently challenge the most able pupils so that more pupils are working at greater depth
- a higher proportion of children reach a good level of development, especially boys and children who are disadvantaged
- all governors have the skills and expertise required to hold senior leaders rigorously to account.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the head of school, other senior leaders and a local authority representative to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher of Whitgreave Junior School. We discussed the support that senior leaders from Whitgreave are providing for senior leaders and staff at Woodfield infant. The school's action plans were evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including guidance and feedback for teachers following senior leaders' visits to lessons, and the latest information about pupils' achievement. The head of school and the headteacher and deputy headteacher from Whitgreave Junior School joined me on visits to some classes in each year group. We talked to pupils about their learning and together we looked at examples of pupils' work.

Woodfield Infant School is federated with Woodfield Junior school. The governing body is responsible for both schools. On 15 November, and during the inspection of Woodfield Junior, I met the chair of the governing body and two other governors to discuss their work and the actions they have taken in relation to both schools.

## **Context**

Since January 2016, the school has been affected by considerable changes in staffing. The headteacher, who was also the executive headteacher with responsibility for overseeing the work of the junior and infant schools, left in August 2016 following a period of absence. In the summer term, the school was led by an interim head of school. You were appointed as the permanent head of school in September 2016. In addition to changes at leadership level, the governing body has appointed six new teachers since the last inspection. In March 2016, the local authority arranged for senior leaders from Whitgreave Junior to support staff at Woodfield. This support has continued. In September, you arranged for an assistant headteacher from a local school to provide class teachers with support.

## **Main findings**

Significant changes in staffing had a detrimental impact on pupils' learning last academic year. The provisional results for 2016 show that at the end of Year 2 standards were below those expected in mathematics, reading and writing. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception Year was below the national figure, with boys and children who are disadvantaged achieving less well than other children nationally.

You and the staff have responded appropriately to the 2016 Year 2 and Reception Year results. You are leading improvements with determination and a sense of urgency. Staff are taking the changes you have introduced in their stride and are refining the way in which they work in response to the feedback you are providing. As a consequence, rates of progress are improving and standards are rising across

the school.

The appointment of new staff has given you the chance to review roles and responsibilities and ensure an equitable workload at all levels of staffing. As a result of effective support and training from senior leaders at Whitgreave and the school's local authority adviser, year group leaders are taking greater responsibility for checking the work of teachers. Following lesson observations, they meet with teachers to discuss the actions that need to be taken to help pupils make even faster progress. You acknowledge that on occasions these actions could be more sharply focused on the progress of pupils of different abilities, especially the most able in Years 1 and 2.

The actions taken to improve teaching in mathematics are having a positive impact. Teachers make sure and senior leaders check that pupils are taught the relevant skills and knowledge for their age group. Work in pupils' books and discussions with pupils confirm that they have a secure understanding of a broad range of mathematical concepts. Opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills and to solve complex problems are developing well. Pupils relish a challenge and respond enthusiastically when asked to explain their answers to questions. In a Year 1 class, for example, pupils were shown a variety of shapes. The pupils had to explain whether the statement, 'all shapes have straight sides' was true or false. The pupils used their knowledge of shapes with accuracy to justify their responses.

During our visits to lessons, we noted that in both English and mathematics teachers make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers' explanations and ask insightful questions when they are not quite sure about their work. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well. Together they keep a watchful eye on pupils and offer suitable support to anyone who needs extra help. They also use questions to successfully extend pupils' thinking.

Teachers are getting better at using the information they have about pupils' achievement to plan work that builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Pupils' books show that the activities for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils of average ability are often set at the right level. Your monitoring confirms that this is helping pupils to make strong gains with their learning. Although the activities for the most able pupils are much more challenging than in the past, there are still occasions when they are not challenging enough. This is leading to uneven rates of progress and preventing the most able pupils from working at greater depth.

The Reception Year group leader has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the early years. She is fully aware that further work is required to help more children reach a good level of development, especially boys and disadvantaged children. This leader has analysed the performance of children and identified those who would benefit from additional support. The school's information

about children's learning and children's work shows that this support is already having a positive impact. I noted that the children in Reception Year are especially keen to talk about their activities and read out their work. You are planning to give staff across the early years the chance to share and develop effective strategies for raising children's achievement.

The contribution of individual governors is variable. While some governors provide a helpful level of support and challenge, others do not. In recognition of this, governors have invited the local authority to review their work. They are planning to use the outcomes of this review to produce an action plan. They also plan to organise training for governors in order to make sure that all governors acquire the skills and expertise required to hold senior leaders rigorously to account.

The school's action plan is suitably focused on addressing the issues identified at the time of the last inspection and the weaknesses caused by the significant changes in staffing. You are in the process of making further amendments to the plan so that it reflects your recent monitoring findings and feedback from the local authority.

### **External support**

The support from senior leaders at Whitgreave Junior and the local authority adviser has provided stability during a period of change. They have played an instrumental role with the recruitment of leaders and teachers. Together with the assistant headteacher from a local school, they have also provided staff with suitable training and support. The impact of this work has resulted in improvements in teaching, higher achievement for pupils currently in the school and improvements in leadership. Together, you have all helped the school to quickly get back on track. Plans are in place for the local authority to review the work of the governing body and to review the school's provision across the early years.

Since September 2016, senior leaders from both Woodfield Infant and Woodfield Junior school have taken part in joint training events. This is giving staff the opportunity to share effective practice.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**