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14 November 2017

Mrs Deborah Colley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Colley

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodgate Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 November 2017, 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 February 2017. 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- make sure that action plans include clear, measurable success criteria so the school's work can be carefully evaluated by leaders and governors
- formulate and implement an action plan, based on the pupil premium review findings, to ensure that funding has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes, and that an evaluation of the impact of such funding is an integral aspect of this plan
- ensure that the monitoring and evaluation schedule allows sufficient time to check on the progress made in addressing the most pressing school priorities.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), other leaders, pupils, governors and a representative from Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The post-Ofsted action plan was evaluated. Pupils' assessment information and the review of governance were considered. Joint visits with leaders were made to several key stage 2 classrooms to observe learning. A range of pupils' books were examined.

## **Context**

Since the previous full inspection, a deputy headteacher, a new English subject leader and a SENCo have been appointed.

There are currently two vacancies on the governing body following the resignation of a parent governor and a co-opted governor in September 2017. The school has recently appointed a new parent governor. There has been a change in staff governor because the previous post holder completed their term in office.

## **Main findings**

You have begun to address all of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. You and other leaders have a comprehensive, realistic view of the school's current strengths and areas that need attention in order to ensure that Woodgate Primary becomes a good school. The school's post-Ofsted action plan highlights the key issues that need addressing but does not specify precisely enough how success will be measured and how actions will contribute to improved outcomes for pupils. This makes monitoring of the action plan more difficult.

You have raised the bar with respect to the expectations of staff and the standards you expect pupils to achieve. You have done this in such a way as to bring all staff with you on this journey of improvement, maintaining morale and showing a collective determination to quickly get pupils' learning back on track. The quality of teaching is improving because of leaders' concerted efforts to identify the weaker elements of teachers' practice and help them improve. For example, leaders have conducted 'deep dive audits' of teaching in some year groups. They have then used the findings to draw up a plan of action and agree a programme of support. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Since the inspection, leaders, with the support of external consultants, have reviewed aspects of the curriculum and implemented some significant changes. For example, there has been an overhaul of mathematics to ensure that pupils master essential calculation skills and develop their ability to reason. A daily 20-minute 'maths on track' session has been introduced. Evidence seen in pupils' books shows that this is proving successful in consolidating their basic numeracy skills. Support

with planning has enabled teachers to make more effective use of their ongoing assessments to plan work which is better matched to pupils' needs.

The changes that you have instigated are contributing to improved outcomes for the majority of pupils, including the most able pupils, throughout the school. By the end of key stage 2, unvalidated national test data shows that pupils' progress scores improved in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 compared to the previous year. Attainment is also rising across most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics, although still remains below national figures.

Leaders and teachers are now using assessment information more effectively to identify, and set targets for, those pupils who are underachieving. A more rigorous approach to 'pupil progress meetings' has ensured a sharper focus on the achievement of key groups, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders hold challenging conversations with teachers about what pupils are expected to achieve. As a consequence, teachers organise bespoke support to help identified pupils make faster progress. The spotlight on individual pupils has contributed positively to raising teachers' expectations about what pupils should be striving to achieve.

Delegating more responsibilities to members of your new leadership team is enabling you to manage whole-school strategic developments more effectively. New leaders show commitment and eagerness. They have been quick to formulate action plans and are already starting to have an impact on improving teaching. New leaders report that they feel well supported by senior leaders and are provided with appropriate training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.

Leaders' checks on progress against the post-Ofsted action plan priorities have become more organised. There is now an annual whole-school monitoring and evaluation schedule in place. However, the schedule is extensive and potentially unmanageable for leaders and governors to carry out. Occasionally, this means leaders have insufficient time to check that their advice or recommendations, based on their monitoring activities, are being acted upon.

Pupils' attendance is improving because of the combined efforts of the attendance officer, leaders and teachers. There is now greater scrutiny of the attendance of different groups, captured in the 'weekly attendance summary'. A range of strategies are deployed to raise parents' awareness about the importance of attending school regularly. You include regular reminders in the school newsletter about the link between good attendance and achieving well. Teachers work in partnership with the attendance officer to identify specific concerns with pupils' absence so these can be tackled without delay. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving.

A review of pupil premium took place towards the end of September. This was originally planned for June, but was postponed by the reviewer. A draft copy of the

review was received by the school on the afternoon of the inspection, however, it was incomplete. Despite this setback, you have not waited to act on this important matter. You have given the deputy headteacher the lead responsibility for pupil premium and also identified a pupil premium governor. Initial work has meant that teachers have a greater awareness about the needs of disadvantaged pupils. There is good evidence of better monitoring of the progress these pupils make.

Overall, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils are improving, although there is still further work to do to diminish the difference between disadvantaged pupils and others. You recognise that there is an urgent need to evaluate the impact of pupil premium spending and determine what is working well and what is not.

An external review of governance was completed in May and governors have already acted on several of the recommendations from the review. For example, a training needs analysis and skills audit has been completed and governors' training needs have been addressed as a result. Other aspects of the review have not yet been completed. For example, there is not a governors' action plan to help them chart and evaluate their progress. The development of governance has been hampered to some extent by several changes of personnel in the governing body.

### **External support**

Leaders and staff engage well with those who provide external support. BEP has provided effective support, including guidance for subject leaders and whole-staff training. The new BEP priority partner has only been involved with the school since September 2017. However, her visits have already had a positive effect on helping new leaders to understand their key leadership responsibilities.

Leaders have also received and acted on advice from a national leader in education from Bournville Teaching Alliance. The school also makes good use of the leadership support received through the Oaks Collegiate.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Hill

**Her Majesty's Inspector**