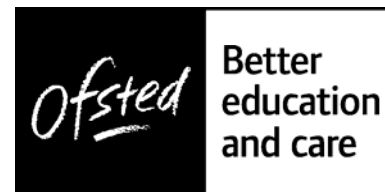


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7 July 2005

Mr J Glass  
Interim Headteacher  
Woodcote Primary School  
Willowbrook Close  
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Leicestershire  
LE65 1JX

Dear Mr Glass

### **Implementation of Woodcote Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Paul Brooker HMI to your school on 4 and 5 July 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school's action plan is satisfactory with some weaknesses. The weaknesses outlined in the second paragraph of the note of the inspection findings should be addressed by the second monitoring inspection.

The LEA's statement of action is satisfactory.

The school has made reasonable progress since being subject to special measures.

The LEA's target date of summer term 2007 for the removal of special measures is realistic.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Leicestershire. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF WOODCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit nine lessons or parts of lessons and one registration session were inspected. Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, nominated staff, two representatives from the governing body and a representative from the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the interim headteacher, two representatives from the governing body and representatives from the LEA.

Following the school's inspection in February 2005, the action plan was drawn up in consultation with school staff, governors and LEA representatives. The plan addresses each of the key issues and outlines an appropriate range of actions. It sets target dates for completing actions; nominates the person responsible for each undertaking; identifies resources needed; and outlines success indicators. The plan is clear and well stated with the exception of procedures for monitoring and evaluation; these need to be more precisely delineated so that those responsible are clear about their roles. The LEA's statement of action mirrors the priorities in the governors' action plan and indicates a suitable commitment to supporting the school.

The headteacher has been absent since just before the last inspection. Since April, the school has been led by an interim headteacher who has been seconded from a local school until January 2006.

Taken over time, standards of attainment in national tests have been consistently well below the median for all schools. There has been significant underachievement. The unvalidated results in the most recent end-of-Key Stage 2 tests show an improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 5 and significant improvements in English. These results were broadly in line with the school's targets. However, there has been no significant overall improvement in standards at either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. Many pupils made satisfactory progress, but the achievement is unsatisfactory for too many pupils.

The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is sound. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons and good in two. All the lessons had good features: there were positive relationships between adults and pupils; the pupils' learning was guided by clear objectives that were shared with the class; the teachers' exposition was good; and work was well structured around a good range of different activities. The classrooms provide a pleasant and well-ordered climate for learning, with some good displays of the pupils' work. Teaching and learning support assistants provide good support for individual pupils and sound support for small groups.

The most effective lessons were very well prepared and well paced, with a good balance of teacher input and well-planned pair and group work. The best teaching was purposeful and focused sharply on what the pupils were to achieve. The best teaching confidently communicated high expectations of the pupils' engagement and outcomes, and managed their learning well.

The quality of learning correlated closely with that of teaching. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed. In the two lessons where teaching was good, the pupils made rapid progress. The pupils' progress was most secure when they could envisage what they were trying to achieve; for example, when teachers took time to model work and when there were good levels of adult support. However, although the pupils make sound progress overall, the quality of their learning was rather uneven within and between lessons. In some lessons this unevenness was linked with the difficult behaviour of a small number of pupils, but in several lessons weaknesses in teaching undermined the pace and quality of learning. Weaker lesson-planning did not adequately define specific learning outcomes and some work lacked challenge, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. In a few lessons the teachers' expectations of the pupils were not high enough at key parts of the lesson; some routines were weak. In addition, strategies for assessing the pupils' understanding and progress during lessons are underdeveloped. Too much questioning was untargeted or closed and did not engage all the pupils in thinking and applying their learning.

The school is developing an effective system for tracking the pupils' progress and is beginning to make good use of assessment information to guide long-term planning and intervention. However, assessment and target-setting are underdeveloped. Although marking is very conscientiously completed, the pupils are not always clear what they have to do to improve their work. Targets are not used effectively to guide short-term goals or to review progress.

The pupils' behaviour continues to improve. The school has revisited the system of rewards and sanctions in order to further strengthen the climate for learning; it has usefully audited and analysed pupil behaviour. There is a stronger sense of celebration and a sharper focus on learning and achievement, rather than simply on good behaviour. Around the school and during play time the pupils were well behaved and followed routines; they interacted sensibly, were polite and showed consideration for others. In lessons, they were generally well behaved and had positive attitudes to learning. Attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory in all lessons, including four that were good and one very good. Most pupils settled quickly to their learning, listened carefully, worked sensibly in small groups and sustained their concentration well. Most took good care with their work. However, the work habits of a small but significant number of pupils are not yet secure. Some do not listen well and shout answers rather than take turns; although most pupils co-operated well, some did not work productively in pairs and groups and were easily distracted when working independently. In addition, the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils continues to disrupt some lessons with unpredictable outbursts or low-level non-compliance. Although such incidents are

well managed and now infrequent, they continue to disrupt lessons by taking up the time of teachers or teaching assistants.

One pupil has been subject to a fixed-term exclusion this year.

Attendance and punctuality continue to improve. Attendance for the year to date is 94.7 per cent with 0.4 per cent unauthorised absence.

The interim headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. He has been clear and unequivocal in communicating his expectations and has guided the necessary improvements well, in order to achieve a lot in a short time. Improvements have been carefully planned and prioritised, and have been properly underpinned by redrafted policies and schemes of work. He has been well supported by the staff, who have worked hard to implement necessary improvements. The leadership and management roles of the subject co-ordinators have been clarified. They are playing an increasingly important role in subject review and policy development, although their curriculum leadership responsibilities are at an early stage of development.

Although the school enjoys a reasonably settled climate, the interim headteacher has sensibly prioritised strengthening ethos and improving behaviour. This has further improved the school's climate and enabled more consistent and effective teaching. The revitalisation of the award system has strengthened the school's celebratory ethos.

The governors recognise that, in the past, they have not provided sufficient challenge for the school and have started to put in place systems for better informing their role. Governance is sound.

Since the last inspection the LEA has provided good guidance for the school and has supported well the development of internal monitoring and evaluation procedures. It has secured the secondment of an effective headteacher to guide the school's improvement. Subject consultants have provided good support and advice.

### **Action taken to address the key issues**

#### **Key Issue 1: raise standards and improve the pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science**

Teaching is now more soundly based on clear planning and is more sharply focused on specific learning objectives. The pupils consequently make sound progress in lessons and over time. The school is establishing secure baseline data on pupils' attainment in order to better measure their progress. There has been detailed analysis of the pupils' performance in statutory and non-statutory tests. This evaluation will be used to guide revisions to planning and future support.

An audit has revealed that the school is under resourced in several crucial areas, such as books for guided reading. This is being addressed systematically.

Results in the most recent national tests do not indicate any significant improvement in standards.

Progress on this key issue is reasonable.

### **Key Issue 2: improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels**

The quality of leadership has been significantly strengthened by the interim headteacher. He has presented the school with a clear vision for improvement, has raised the expectations of the staff and pupils of what they can achieve and has prioritised actions well. The process of improvement has been suitably underpinned by the development of sound policies and procedures for monitoring progress. The interim headteacher's calm and firm management has quickly won the confidence of the staff, parents and pupils. Staff, parents and governors are kept well informed about changes in the school.

The leadership and management roles of subject co-ordinators have been clarified and several curriculum responsibilities have been sensibly reallocated. Staff are clearer about their roles and responsibilities and who to turn to for support. The numeracy co-ordinator role is developing well, but the roles of other subject leaders remain underdeveloped.

There has been steady improvement in the overall effectiveness of governance, based largely on better information and effective training and guidance. The governing body is committed to school improvement and is strengthening its monitoring role.

Progress on this key issue is good.

### **Key Issue 3: improve the quality of teaching**

A comprehensive programme of lesson observations has given the headteacher a clear overview of strengths of teaching and the areas for development. Steps have been taken to address some identified weaknesses, such as strengthening teachers' subject knowledge, improving teaching resources and establishing a common system of rewards and sanctions.

A teaching and learning policy has been drafted. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, although the proportion that is good or very good is too low.

Progress on this key issue is reasonable.