

PROTECT-INSPECTION

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15 September 2011

Mrs A Evans
Headteacher
Woodslee Primary School
Croft Avenue
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Dear Mrs Evans

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Woodslee Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 14 September 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I am grateful to the representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority for sparing the time to meet with me. It was a pleasure to speak to pupils, so please pass on my thanks to them also.

Since the last inspection a new leadership team has been formed, including the internal appointment of an assistant headteacher. The school has a new special needs coordinator and two new governors are in post.

As a result of the inspection on Wednesday 9 June 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Results of the national assessments and tests in 2010 show that attainment was broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6 and Year 2. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attain well, when compared to national averages and data would also indicate that boys achieve better than girls. Improvements have been made in literacy and hence, the school is now developing mathematics, including a focus on mental arithmetic skills. Provisional results for 2011 show attainment remaining in line with national expectations at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Current data held by the school generally show pupils make progress in line with national expectations, although there are fluctuations between cohorts and groups of pupils. The school is aware of this and is now, due to more sophisticated tracking procedures, able to intervene more quickly when pupils start to fall behind.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Senior leaders have focused on improving teaching and learning. Priority has been given to matching activities in lessons to pupils' individual need. An audit of teachers' planning has been carried out to ensure work set supports pupils' next steps in their learning. Assessments are now more regularly made to ensure pupils and groups make appropriate progress. Achievement is monitored through a system of tracking which is becoming more secure across the school. Staff training has been held on developing criteria for good teaching and learning, and a programme of monitoring by senior leaders is in place. Work has developed, through providing relevant feedback, to encourage pupils' independence. Teachers are increasingly giving clearer guidance in lessons to enable pupils to move on to the next stages of learning. However, this is still not consistently applied by all teachers. An audit of assessment for learning strategies has taken place, and some teachers have embraced this way of working. Pupils talk positively about teaching and learning saying, 'lessons are fun', and, 'if you get stuck teachers come and help you'.

Teachers, through training, have focused on teaching and learning strategies in lessons. However, the extent to which all teachers accurately match work to individual need varies, with some giving greater focus to teaching as opposed to pupils' learning. Some collaborative learning techniques are used well, although some passive learning still hinders faster progress for some pupils. More-able pupils receive work devised as a 'challenge', although expectations by some teachers could be more developed. Pupils have targets to help them improve. They are able to discuss these and generally are aware of what they need to do to improve. Older pupils are aware of their National Curriculum level of attainment in English and mathematics.

Improvements have been made to develop pupils' understanding of the wider world. The school has focused on improving local links where pupils are more involved with their local community, for example, monitoring traffic levels outside school with the police. UK links have improved and the school has developed a richer curriculum where links on a global scale are more evident.

Assessment of children's skills on entry to Nursery has improved. Key staff have been appointed and, through working closely with the local authority, have ensured a focus on assessing knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning. Training of staff has been delivered and baseline assessments are now completed for each child when they start school. Adults are now more confident in making assessments based on first-hand observations. Data for the Early Years Foundation Stage are scrutinised by senior leaders.

The headteacher has prioritised improving pupils' progress and is determined to further raise achievement across the school. She now monitors all pupils, groups and cohorts and holds pupil progress meetings with all class teachers. These are supported by the senior leadership team. The headteacher is relentless in her pursuit to improve achievement and has appropriately highlighted strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the progress made by pupils in their class, although this is not yet as consistent as it might be.

The governing body has received training in the use of data and is more aware of attainment and levels of progress. Hence, it is now in a better position to hold the school to account.

Training, tailored to the needs of the school, has been delivered both internally and by the local authority. This has supported the school's priorities. Areas identified include mathematics, the Early Years Foundation Stage and communication, language and literacy. A close partnership has developed between the headteacher and local authority advisers and training of staff has been well received.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place Wednesday 9 June 2010

- Improve the quality of learning and teaching, by:
 - ensuring a better match of activities in lessons to pupils' needs, especially of the more able
 - helping pupils to work independently by giving them clearer guidance in lessons on how to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- Broaden pupils' understanding of and contact with the richness of the wider world.
- Develop more efficient analysis of pupil progress data by:
 - improving the assessment of children's skills on entry to the Nursery
 - gaining a clearer picture at senior leadership level of the progress made by different groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.