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27 September 2013

Mr R Wilson  
Headteacher  
Woodlands School  
The Woodlands Centre  
Tilley Green  
SY4 5PJ

Dear Mr Wilson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodlands School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. 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 June 2013. 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 that the process for assessing students' work is straightforward and coherent, and all that subject staff moderate their assessments with other staff and leaders, including those from other schools
- clarify the qualifications pathway for the less academically able students in Years 9-11, making sure that it is flexible enough to meet students' needs as they move through these year groups
- write a rationale for the way in which behaviour is managed in the school and use this as the introduction for the behaviour policy.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, the leader of English, the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I visited four lessons during which I talked to students about their work.

## **Main findings**

Since the section 5 inspection in June, you and your leadership team and staff have taken a range of suitable and positive actions to improve the school.

The new school improvement plan is thorough and clear. It systematically outlines the actions that will be taken to tackle each area for improvement identified in the section 5 report. It clearly notes how leaders will monitor whether each action has taken place. How the effectiveness of each action will be evaluated is largely clear, but in a few sections it has not yet been noted. You have put the action plan into a useful 'milestones' document, which is a helpful tool both for senior leaders and governors to ensure that the actions are on track term by term.

Comprehensive and effective action has been taken to improve the process of setting targets for students and tracking their progress. Crucially, targets will now be set on the basis of national data. The senior leader responsible for this area has a good understanding of what constitutes nationally expected rates of progress, and how to set challenging targets accordingly. A new tracking system has been introduced, which allows the school to record on a termly basis whether students are on track to meet their targets, and to take necessary action if they are not.

You have involved staff in working parties to look at key areas for improvement, such as behaviour. This is enabling staff to take greater leadership of different areas of the school's work. Greater emphasis has been placed on the need for consistent behaviour management, and staff are expected to review students' behaviour against six expectations at the end of each lesson. When this was seen in one of the lessons visited, students understood the system and the teacher involved them in appropriate discussion of how well they had behaved. Importantly, these expectations emphasise attitudes to learning and positive interactions with other people.

There is a well organised programme of professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, focused on the areas for improvement from the inspection. You understand the need to triangulate your judgements on teaching by using a range of evidence in addition to lesson observations and have a clear plan for how and when this will be done.

The English leader has already introduced some strategies to promote literacy development in the school, such as 'vocabulary mats', and more are imminent. She is working closely with non-specialist colleagues to ensure that assessment is accurate and teaching at the right level.

The governing body has a good knowledge of the action plan and has begun to discuss their specific role in monitoring the effectiveness of the school's actions. They have commissioned a review of governance from the National College of School Leadership, and have agreed that this will be carried out by a National Leader of Governance from a school similar to yours. They plan to use this to decide on their training needs, and have discussed with the local authority what could be provided.

### **External support**

The school is making good use of external support. The local authority has provided swift and appropriate support in the form of whole school training about differentiation, and support for English. The school improvement adviser has arranged dates on which to carry out paired observations with you and your senior team and to assist with the triangulation of judgements. She is meeting with senior leaders on a fortnightly basis. She has planned a thorough programme of training for teaching assistants. You have also secured a range of tailored support from a local Teaching School, which is already proving to be useful.

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

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for insert local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**