

Serco Inspections  
Boundary House  
2 Wythall Green Way  
Middle Lane  
BIRMINGHAM  
West Midlands  
B47 6LW

**OFSTED**  
T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**SERCO**  
Direct T 0121 683 2888



Thursday 4 November 2010

Mrs Parker  
Gladstone Primary School  
Gladstone Street  
Peterborough  
PE1 2BZ

Dear Mrs Parker

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Gladstone Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 3 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils who talked with me, both in meetings and around school.

The school has appointed an additional assistant headteacher since the last inspection. This means that the school now has two assistant headteachers. One is responsible for Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage while the other has responsibility for Key Stage 2.

As a result of the inspection on 19 March 2009, 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.

Standards of attainment remain low but are improving. The school has credible strategies in place to target the remaining underachievement in the current Year 6. Pupils in this cohort have made limited progress recently but are catching up now. Year 5 pupils are on target to reach standards of attainment that are higher than those seen in recent years and Year 4 pupils are in a comparatively stronger position again as a result of improvements in teaching and higher expectations.

Leadership has improved. Leaders at all levels have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders have a clear view of the overall effectiveness of the school and are becoming increasingly effective at planning school improvement to develop provision. Leaders at all levels work with increasing effectiveness as a team, understanding that their impact is stronger when

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coordinated. Middle leaders talk with intelligence about the priorities for the future and the work done so far. However, while leaders believe the improvements seen are being effective, their evaluations are not sufficiently focused on the impact they are having on pupils' outcomes.

Teaching is improving. Clear strategies are developing throughout the school that are leading to improved outcomes, particularly in literacy, for all pupils including the more able. Pupils are increasingly being challenged through their tasks and all teaching seen included adapted work for different groups and abilities. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising although the level of challenge in some lessons could be higher still. All teachers are developing their questioning skills. Consequently, pupils' language skills are increasing as they have more opportunities to extend their answers and explain their thinking. Opportunities to develop literacy are now found across the curriculum and these are having an impact on pupils' speaking and listening and writing skills. Marking is steadily improving in both consistency and impact. In the best classes, feedback is providing clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. This is most successful in literacy where some teachers are now expecting pupils to improve their work as a result of the feedback they receive. However some marking, whilst following the agreed protocols, is still not giving pupils the specific guidance they need to make improvements in their work.

The school has recognised that boys generally make better progress than girls. Lesson observations show that one reason for this is that, in some classes, boys are quick to shout out and dominate in class. The school has identified that many girls lack confidence to contribute willingly, particularly when they are unsure or dealing with new information. Some strategies are having an impact on reducing this inequality, such as the development of 'girl only' groupings and random choosing of names to answer questions in class. However, it is noticeable that the quality of teaching has a significant impact in reducing these gaps. In the best lessons, with high expectations of behaviour and work, boys and girls make equally good progress. This is because questions are carefully chosen, pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of their behaviour and pupils have the opportunity to think and talk about their learning in small groups.

The local authority is providing intensive support to the school in making necessary improvements by supporting leaders and providing additional analysis of the impact of school improvement. Local authority reports accurately show that leadership is demonstrating an ever increasing capacity to improve further. Consultants have worked closely with middle leaders in improving provision. Middle leaders are taking increasing control of the improvement agenda and this bodes well for continuing and sustained improvements.

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

Michael Sheridan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2009.**

- Implement the plans to further strengthen the leadership and management in order to drive up standards.
- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils, particularly the more able, and consistently shows pupils exactly how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the strategies aimed at raising the standards of literacy across the curriculum are firmly embedded in all lessons.