

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

SERCO
Direct T 0121 683 2888



18 November 2010

Mrs Knapton
Headteacher
Swannington Church of England Primary School
Main Street
Swannington
Coalville
LE67 8QJ

Dear Mrs Knapton

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Swannington Church of England Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 17 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 members of staff and to the pupils who spoke with me.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant staff changes for this very small school. The senior teacher has been on maternity leave for two terms during which time an acting deputy headteacher has been appointed. One teacher, who job shared a class-teaching commitment with the headteacher, retired in July. A new full-time teacher has been appointed for this class and the headteacher now covers the planning, preparation and assessment time across school. The headteacher is retiring in December. The senior teacher will return as acting headteacher for two terms while a new substantive headteacher is appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 28 January 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.

Since the last inspection, there are signs of improvement in pupils' achievement. The school has maintained a rising trend in pupils' attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1 where pupils progress well and more pupils are achieving Level 3 than at the time of the last inspection. The successes of these pupils are being built on satisfactorily in Years 3 and 4 where

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teachers' assessments, observations in lessons and the analysis of pupils' work show that pupils are on track to attain above average standards in English and mathematics. The same trend is not consistently evident at the end of Key Stage 2 where pupils' attainment dipped from above average in 2009 to below average in 2010. Pupils' progress continues to be variable over time but is satisfactory overall. There has been a legacy of low attainment due to gaps in basic skills not being filled by the time pupils leave the school. However, improved systems for tracking pupils' progress and analysing data are leading to better knowledge of pupils' attainment and the setting of more consistently challenging targets. The gaps in basic skills are now promptly and precisely identified and additional appropriate interventions put in place to address them so that older pupils are now on track to attain average standards by the time they leave the school. School data also confirm that some variations in the performance of groups remain.

Leaders are also using more accurate data to challenge teachers about pupils' progress and raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve. All staff have responded well to the recommendation that progress in writing be increased. The profile of writing has been raised and many good examples to which pupils can aspire are celebrated across the school. The necessary basic skills are emphasised in planning and pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. Parents have been included and, along with pupils, are enthusiastic about completing the new learning logs. Pupils also talk enthusiastically about how 'doing the big write' has helped them improve their writing. The new approach has yet to become embedded equally well across school. There are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their skills in a range of subjects to the same standard seen in their literacy lessons or to ensure that enough pupils attain the highest grade of which they are capable. Similarly, in mathematics, teachers are regularly revisiting basic skills to ensure that pupils are secure in their learning and are more regularly planning hands-on practical activities which improve enjoyment and engagement. However, there are not enough problem-solving and open-ended opportunities to ensure higher-order skills are developed. Teachers undertake their planning conscientiously. They produce detailed plans but do not always take enough note of their assessments of pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils too often carry out the same task, regardless of their ability. Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding during lessons, so misunderstandings are not promptly addressed or plans modified when work is too easy or too hard. However, procedures for giving feedback to pupils have been revised and pupils are happy that it makes clear to them what they have to do to improve.

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school's work is more widely shared than at the time of the previous inspection. Staff are enthusiastic, reflective and committed to school improvement. English and mathematics coordinators have had some experience of conducting lesson observations, work sampling and learning walks, and their findings have influenced practice in school. However, some leaders are new to their roles and a regular and rigorous programme of these activities has yet to be set up and its impact monitored. The governing body receive useful



evaluative information about the school's work and a more regular programme of governor monitoring has begun. Lesson observations are carried out regularly and feedback shared. However, there is not always enough focus on the quality of learning and progress taking place. Similarly, strategic planning across the school is very detailed but lacks sufficient focus on pupils' outcomes.

School leaders value the support they have received from the local authority and confirm, for example, that participation in the 'Intensifying Support Programme', including the introduction of layered targets, has been particularly beneficial. Similarly, participation in the initiative to improve outcomes for girls in mathematics has helped improve mathematics teaching across the school.

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

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2009

- Increase progress in writing and mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6, by setting and achieving challenging targets
- Ensure that pupils are always given work that matches their needs
- Involve all leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to ensure that provision is consistently good.