

Serco Inspections
Cedar House
21 William Street
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1LH

Ofsted
T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Serco
Direct T 0121 683 3888



13 July 2011

Mr L Venning
Headteacher
Heatherbrook Primary School
Astill Lodge Road
Leicester
LE4 1BE

Dear Mr Venning

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

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 July 2011, 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 the pupils who spoke with me.

There have been changes to staffing since the last inspection. A part-time teacher has left the school and a new full-time teacher has been appointed to Year 4. The governing body has appointed a new Chair of Governors.

As a result of the inspection on 21 September 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. From below average starting points, children reach the levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage. This represents good progress and is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 2 remains broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics has increased and compares well to that found in most schools. Attainment remains broadly average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 but an increased proportion of pupils have been successful in gaining the levels expected for their age. There are still not enough pupils excelling at the higher levels of which many are capable. Pupils in Year 4 are securely on track to attain at least

September 2010



the levels expected of them. While attainment is broadly average in other year groups, the picture is more mixed, with some pupils needing to make accelerated progress to ensure that they do not get left behind. Pupils' skills with information and communication technology are developing more rapidly and they are applying their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects to a higher standard.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, the progress pupils make is mostly satisfactory; for a number, it is good. In classes where the teaching is consistently strong or where additional interventions are well focused, school data and pupils' work confirm that progress has been accelerating. This is the case for those pupils who have received additional support to improve their reading and writing skills or where they have been taught the sounds that letters make in a structured and rigorous way, but not so for all pupils in all classes. School data analysis and other monitoring confirm some variation between year groups. It identifies times when progress slows, leading to a reliance on accelerated progress later to ensure pupils catch up. Leaders have put interventions in place to make sure these pupils do not get left behind. Pupils from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds or who are in the early stages of learning English progress at least as well as their peers.

Attendance is broadly average. The school works with other agencies to persuade parents and carers of the importance of regular attendance. According to pupils, behaviour in school is much improved because of the clear system of rewards and sanctions which has been put in place and the renewed focus on developing personal and social skills. During the visit, behaviour in classrooms was mostly good, particularly where pupils were given interesting tasks which kept them highly engaged.

Success so far has been due in no small part to the accuracy of the headteacher's evaluation of the school's strengths and areas of weakness. Action planning is focused on the correct areas for development and has resulted in the emergence of more consistent and effective features in teaching and learning, and with the support of the deputy headteacher, the design of a more appropriate curriculum. These action plans sometimes lack clear and measurable success criteria and interim benchmarks. The headteacher has an astute view of the quality of teaching and learning, uses data analysis well to target resources and holds teachers to account for the performance of pupils. These developments demonstrate a strengthened capacity for continued improvement. Leadership has been restructured and roles have been reorganised. However, leaders beyond the senior leadership team have yet to become fully engaged in quickening the pace of improvement.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory though the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Planning is conscientiously done, based on accurate assessment and details activities to meet the needs of different abilities. This is not always carried through to lessons when opportunities are sometimes missed to ask probing questions, to check understanding, and modify plans accordingly when pupils are

finding work too easy or too hard. Marking has improved but occasionally the feedback given to pupils lacks clarity and pupils are not given the opportunity to address the points made. Pupils say that the targets they are given help them to improve their work.

The new curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure the progression of knowledge and skills. Teachers are more creative in the way they deliver the curriculum so that it appeals to the preferred learning styles and interest of more pupils. The cross-curricular topic themes are more engaging and pupils are beginning to talk about lasting memories from curriculum experiences. For example, the 'Amazing Adventures' topic involved participation in several exciting outdoor pursuits which then stimulated improvements in the quality of writing in Year 6, particularly for boys. The 'World Kitchen' theme for younger pupils also resulted in some high quality writing as well as developing mathematical and scientific skills along with a better understanding of healthy eating and a range of cultures. There are still not enough opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, to extend pupils' vocabulary, or to write at length. The curriculum for pupils who require additional nurture in order to overcome their barriers to learning is developing well. Revisions to curriculum provision for those pupils with a special educational need and/or a disability have recently been reviewed with new arrangements to be implemented next term.

School leaders value the good support they have received from local authority consultants, particularly in the development of assessment, teaching of mathematics, the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and from the Behaviour Support team.

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 September 2009

- In order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards the school should:
 - ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is more consistently good
 - complete the review of the curriculum better to meet the full range of learners' needs
 - make better use of assessment information when planning lessons.

- Ensure all pupils are set challenging targets and that they know precisely what is expected of them.

- Develop the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders to enable them to contribute more effectively to school improvement.