

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 2888



15 September 2011

Mrs Jackie Conacher
Headteacher
Stoney Middleton C of E (C) Primary School
High Street
Stoney Middleton
Hope Valley
S32 4TL

Dear Mrs Conacher

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Stoney Middleton Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Wednesday 14 September, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, as well as the representative of the governing body with whom I spoke, for their time and courtesy. I would also like to thank the pupils for making me feel so welcome.

Since the school's last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing at the school, including the appointment of a part-time executive headteacher in June in 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 19 January 2011 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection, progress has recently begun to accelerate, particularly at Key Stage 2. Lessons observed jointly with senior leaders confirm that all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress, with some beginning to make more rapid, accelerated progress. A scrutiny of pupils' work confirms this improving progress. New systems for monitoring teaching and learning are more rigorous than previously and are also making an important contribution to these improvements. Whilst it is too early to judge the impact of these improvements on pupils' attainment, challenging targets have been set by senior leaders and robust assessment and

tracking systems indicate that these improvements in pupils' progress are likely to secure an upturn in their attainment.

Teachers are working productively with senior leaders and consultants to improve their practice and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Although this is helping to improve pupils' learning and their rates of progress, it is not sufficiently embedded across the school to secure consistently good progress for all pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress towards their targets have been overhauled. As a result, the quality of planning is consistent throughout the school and assessment information is beginning to be used successfully to pitch work at the correct level for many pupils. However, expectations are still not always sufficiently ambitious for higher-attaining pupils and sometimes their work lacks the challenge that would enable these pupils to demonstrate their skills of creativity, investigation and independence. Most pupils know their targets and are beginning to have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Marking provides pupils with helpful guidance to show how they can improve their work, which complements the more challenging targets they are now being given.

The school has started to restructure the curriculum and this is contributing to the improving picture. Subjects are more carefully linked, while ensuring that the basics are thoroughly covered. As part of their efforts to raise attainment in mathematics, staff have recognised that there is more to do to extend pupils' strategies for solving mathematical problems and using them in practical situations. In response, they are identifying where pupils can use their mathematical skills in other subjects. A number of initiatives are being introduced to develop greater opportunities for extended and purposeful writing across the curriculum. These have not had sufficient time to impact on raising pupils' attainment in writing.

The new headteacher's dedication and commitment is successfully embedding a shared vision for on-going improvement. Middle leaders are developing their skills appropriately and, consequently, are beginning to contribute valuable skills and knowledge as equal members of the school improvement team. Members of the governing body are actively involved at all levels of school life. They have received additional training to support them in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and, as a result, they are beginning to hold the school more rigorously to account.

The local authority's (LA) statement of action meets requirements and correctly identifies the priorities required for school improvement. The school appreciates the excellent support provided by the LA, particularly the challenge and guidance of the School Improvement Partner.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2011

- Develop the curriculum to improve progress and raise standards, especially at Key Stage 2 by:
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems confidently
 - extending the opportunities across all subjects for pupils to write at length and in depth in different contexts.

- Ensure that the quality of lesson planning, teaching and learning is consistently good or better by:
 - making effective use of assessment information to set work that challenges pupils of different abilities, especially the more able
 - ensuring that pupils know their targets and recognise what aspects of their work they need to improve.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher, subject leaders and where appropriate, the governing body, systematically and rigorously check and improve provision and outcomes in areas for which they hold responsibility.