

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

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

Serco
Direct T 0121 683 3888



16 January 2012

Mrs D Rothwell
Headteacher
Raleigh Infant School and Nursery
Admirals Way
Thetford
IP24 2JT

Dear Mrs Rothwell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Raleigh Infant School and Nursery

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 January 2012 and for the information which you provided prior to and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and the pupils, who were very accommodating and responsive during my visits to classrooms. Please also pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body and the office manager for their input.

Since the last inspection in June 2010, one member of staff has left the school and been replaced by a newly qualified teacher. This term, the deputy headteacher has returned from maternity leave. Aspects of her management role have been covered by existing senior members of staff. A second maternity leave is being covered by another newly qualified teacher until July 2012.

As a result of the inspection on 17 June 2010, 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.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Following its previous inspection, the school's 2010 Key Stage 1 performance data showed a continuation of broadly average attainment overall from that in 2009. Mathematics showed good improvement but remained average. This represented satisfactory progress from pupils' broadly average starting point on entry to Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language also made satisfactory progress. The school's 2011 Key Stage 1 performance data shows significant improvement to above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher expectations for the most able pupils

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resulted in a significant rise of 9% of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading, 18% in writing and 5% in mathematics. This represents good progress from these pupils' average starting point on entry into Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language made correspondingly good progress. Whilst this indicates some good progress towards improving attainment and rates of progress, this has not yet been consolidated beyond a single year. School assessments and pupil progress tracking indicate that pupils in the current Year 2 are on track to reach at least expected levels by the end of the year. Pupils in Year 1 also appear to be appropriately on track at this stage in the year.

The quality of teaching

Monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and increasingly effective in improving teaching. Detailed and evaluative reports are used well to provide constructive feedback to teachers on how they can improve their practice. Although satisfactory overall, a higher proportion of the teaching is good. During my visit, joint observations with you highlighted both the positive impact of your regular monitoring and also the need for continued action where teaching is less than good. In most lessons seen, teaching was confident and well structured to meet the varying needs of pupils. Effective use of adult support and skilful use of questioning ensured good challenge for all pupils. Boys and girls were suitably engaged and willing to contribute so that they learn well. Ongoing coaching from mentors and senior leaders is helping those teachers who lack confidence or who are less experienced to develop these skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are very well included. Effective provision and support for their learning ensures that they make good progress. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' English books show that all pupils are writing regularly. Most complete written tasks satisfactorily. Teachers are signposting pupils towards continued improvement through their marking and ongoing feedback in lessons. Where good teaching incorporates a variety of interesting approaches and exciting resources, pupils visibly enjoy learning and work with sustained interest, sometimes using their own initiative. Planning demonstrates how the good curriculum is continuing to focus on the wider aspects of learning for life, including developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and to embrace the pupils' own interests. The school rightly evaluates that more work is needed to ensure that all teachers' planning adheres to the agreed format and content, whilst allowing flexibility for creativity and responding to pupils' needs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good, as at the previous inspection, and attitudes to learning positive. Pupils demonstrate a caring attitude towards each other in lessons and work well together. They are very accepting of difference. The governing body ensures that

statutory arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils fully meet regulatory requirements. Pupils are clear that they feel very safe in school and know who to go to if they have a problem.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Outcomes from the school's previous inspection spurred the leadership team to take concerted, timely and purposeful action which is raising achievement and securing pupils' accelerated progress. Much work has been undertaken to improve teachers' understanding and use of assessment data. As a result, systems are now simple and effective. Teachers find them user-friendly and use assessment information to set more challenging targets for pupils and to measure progress against them. School leaders now have higher expectations in respect of teachers' accountability for pupils achieving their targets. The governing body is also better equipped to understand what the data is indicating so that it can better challenge leaders over the school's performance. The school rightly evaluates that the next step is to pull together the vast amount of data held by the school to provide a comprehensive overview of whole-school progress.

Senior leaders actively seek advice and support from external partners. Although still developing, all staff and members of the governing body are involved in monitoring and evaluating processes. Generally accurate self-evaluation enables the school to identify where it is now and what needs to be done to improve. Development plans identify appropriate priorities, mostly with timescales. These are helping to moving the school forward. The school rightly evaluates that there is more work to be done in ensuring that all aspects are more evaluative and based on secure evidence which support judgements. Leaders and managers are transparent and honest about the school's satisfactory overall effectiveness and progress towards improvement since the previous inspection.

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

Nichola Perry
Additional inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010

- Improve attainment and rates of progress for pupils in Key Stage 1, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are always challenged effectively
 - during lessons, consistently giving pupils clear and precise expectations that meet their varying needs
 - giving pupils ongoing feedback and opportunities to participate in evaluating their learning more routinely in lessons
 - ensuring that the subject matter is always equally interesting to boys and girls
 - sharing the best teaching practice in the school more systematically.

- Increase the rigour in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness by:
 - ensuring that development plans are more clearly prioritised and always include an unambiguous means of determining the level of success
 - giving teachers more precise feedback on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning in lessons, and keeping a record of this
 - refining the use of school data so that all staff and governors can analyse pupils' progress more effectively.