

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Serco
Direct T 0121 683 3888



23 February 2012

Mrs Melsa Buxton
Executive Headteacher
The Fountains Primary School
Bitham Lane
Stretton
Burton-on-Trent
DE13 0HB

Dear Mrs Buxton

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Fountains Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 February 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Could I also ask you to pass on my thanks to the pupils I met, who made me feel very welcome in your school.

As a result of the inspection on 29 November 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Since the previous inspection, the school has become a foundation school as part of The Burton Community Learning Trust with several local mainstream primary schools and the federated special high school. The leadership of the school has also been restructured with new appointments to team leader roles, covering the three areas of the Early years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and complex needs.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Pupils' progress in lessons and over time has improved since the previous inspection. They are now engaged in a wider range of activities in lessons. These include whole-class work, small group and paired work, and individual tasks. This combination of activities allows pupils to develop their skills of working independently as well as developing the skills required to work and socialise with others. As a result of the improved quality of teaching and focused support, there is more challenge for all

January 2012



pupils, and higher expectations are contributing to improved levels of achievement. Changes to the staffing structure and the curriculum have also had an impact on improving the progress made by pupils in lessons and over time. These changes include: pupils being streamed for the core subjects; the introduction of more opportunities to promote creativity through cross-curricular themes and team teaching; and the increased involvement of senior and lead teaching assistants in planning and teaching lessons. Systems for the collection and interpretation of data have been reviewed and amended. Although the new systems are in their early days, middle leaders and teachers are already being held more accountable for the rate of progress which pupils make. The impact of extra support provided is monitored carefully for the impact it has on pupils' learning and progress.

The quality of teaching

Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school. There is more good teaching in the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Joint lessons observations with the executive headteacher during the inspection showed that there was strong agreement regarding what constitutes effective teaching. The introduction of a new scheme to support the teaching of literacy has also helped teachers to refocus their teaching and has helped them to provide more targeted activities with more appropriate pace to support learning for all pupils. The changes to the staffing structure have also raised expectations of team working, so that all staff are able to contribute to pupils' learning more effectively. Staff are now more analytical in their work and are focused on how to improve learning for all pupils. The improved assessment schemes have allowed more training to be provided so that staff can better understand their place in the assessment of pupils' progress and the evaluation of the learning taking place. There is a clearer understanding of how assessment can be used to support pupils' learning in all lessons. Target setting is more robust and pupils have a range of targets that they work towards. This allows staff to contribute more effectively to monitoring the progress of pupils as the outcomes for their learning are clear and well understood by all. Closer scrutiny of pupils' targets also allows teachers to plan more varied and exciting activities in their lessons which meet the needs of all pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils continue to behave well and enjoy their time in the school. All lessons are characterised by full engagement and strong relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils. Pupils relate well to each other and this is evident in the joint working that they do. In the better lessons, the combination of individual and group activities showed that pupils are increasingly able to work independently or collaboratively in groups. When there are instances of off-task behaviour starting to develop, staff are skilled in re-engaging pupils so that minimal time for learning is lost. School leaders, supported by all staff, are aware of the need to develop pupils' personal skills and awareness of the wider community. They do this successfully in a

variety of ways, including through trips in to the local community where the school is held in high regard.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Senior leaders, led by the dynamic and well-respected executive headteacher, have a very clear and accurate awareness of the strengths of the school. They have detailed plans in place to improve the school and have introduced several significant changes to the school's structures and procedures. Accountability for the performance of the school is increasingly distributed, so that more staff are now aware of the part they play in contributing to school improvement and the raising of achievement. The recently-appointed middle leaders, alongside the revised teaching assistants staffing structure, means that there is more accountability at different tiers of staff for the performance of pupils in their areas. Middle leaders have started to monitor the quality of teaching and learning within their teams and, with support from senior leaders, are increasingly able to use data to identify where pupils need extra support. The streaming of groups in literacy has recently been reviewed and will now be extended, so that pupils will be streamed in their numeracy lessons from Easter.

The governing body has been through significant turbulence since the previous inspection and valuable time was lost in addressing the issues identified at that time. However, the new Chair of the Governing Body, who has been in post for less than a year, has worked hard to re-establish a committee structure and identify named governors to monitor and report on different areas of the school's work. This has allowed the governing body to sow the seeds of holding the school to account, although this is in its infancy.

The local authority has provided support to the governing body to help them in rectifying many of the issues identified in the last inspection. The school's change to foundation status has served to strengthen partnerships with other schools in the local area. The partnership with the school's partner high school has also helped to share best practice between the schools.

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

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate progress and improve the frequency of good and better teaching by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn to find things out for themselves
 - pitching tasks to meet different abilities within the class more precisely
 - using the skills of the teaching assistants more effectively.

- Improve the management of teaching and learning by:
 - carrying out more rigorous monitoring throughout the school, focused on pupils' progress, with action points that are promptly followed up
 - improving liaison between the HDU and the High School so that pupils gain more experience of an age-appropriate environment and have more contact with pupils of their own age.

- Improve governance by ensuring that all members of the governing body:
 - are directly involved in setting priorities for improvement
 - play their part in evaluating, first-hand, the work of the school.