

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
**Direct T 0121 683 3888**



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Mrs D Warren  
Headteacher  
Brambleside Community Primary School  
Cleveland Avenue  
Kettering  
NN16 9JG

Dear Mrs Warren

**Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Brambleside Community Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 May 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff who met with me, as well as the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority representative who attended the inspection at short notice.

Since the last inspection, a new Chair of the Governing Body and three new governing body members have been appointed. The special educational needs coordinator has recently returned from a period of maternity leave. Two teachers are currently on long-term sick leave. The school has received support to improve its provision from two local partner schools, recognised for excellent practice.

As a result of the inspection on 3 November 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.

Children begin the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. At the time of the last inspection, inspectors found that pupils made good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was much weaker, particularly in writing. The latest school pupil assessment tracking data indicate that pupils continue to make stronger progress in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. However, pupils' attainment in English in Key Stage 2 is rising because different groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and those who are more able, are

making improved progress in writing. Pupils in the current Year 6 cohort are expected to attain broadly in line with expected levels in English. Their progress in English during Year 6 has been good. However their progress over the full key stage is expected to be slightly below average, due to prior underachievement.

Attainment in English is rising because the quality of teaching and the curriculum are improving. There are more frequent opportunities for pupils to write at length in Key Stage 2 and each pupil now completes at least one extended piece of writing each week. As a result, pupils demonstrate increased stamina in writing activities and have more frequent opportunities to practise and apply the skills they have learned in lessons. However, there is still considerable variation between classes in expected standards of pupils' handwriting, presentation and use of punctuation.

Numerous displays around the school showcasing pupils' written work have successfully helped to raise the profile of writing. As a result, different groups of pupils speak enthusiastically about their written work and say that they enjoy writing. There are increased opportunities for pupils to apply and develop writing skills in subjects other than English. These are monitored closely by subject leaders and overseen effectively by the literacy leader to ensure consistency across the curriculum.

The quality of teaching in English lessons is improving. However, the school is still slightly below the target set in the statement of action, which suggests that 80% of teaching should be judged good or better by May 2012. Teachers provide pupils with good quality marking and feedback following written work. Pupils frequently engage in self- and peer-assessment of their work and are aware of their personal targets in writing. Learning intentions and success criteria are shared with pupils in all English lessons. These positive features of practice combine well to help pupils identify the next steps of learning they need to take and are having a positive impact on their improved progress. Teachers generally assess pupils' learning in lessons well by frequently checking their work. However, on some occasions, teachers do not check pupils' work frequently enough and this means that misconceptions are not always identified and addressed as swiftly as they could be.

Some highly effective teaching was observed during the inspection. For example, in an English lesson in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher introduced the learning objective and then skilfully encouraged pupils to identify challenging success criteria for themselves. The pace of learning for all pupils, including more-able pupils, was at just the right level, and learning activities were challenging and stimulating. As a result, pupils made outstanding progress. However, some teachers still do not plan lesson activities and success criteria which are challenging enough for more-able pupils. On these occasions, the pace of learning is still too slow for these pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve less well than they could do, because not enough is expected of them.

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have addressed the priority areas for improvement satisfactorily. The governing body provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders. However, the school acknowledge that the monitoring activities of the governing body could be more sharply defined in action plans to identify exactly who will check the impact of the school's actions, when it will be checked and how. The headteacher observes lessons frequently. The feedback provided to teachers following these observations has been useful and developmental and has improved teachers' practice. The literacy coordinator and other senior leaders complete detailed scrutinies of teachers' planning, assessment and tracking information, and pupils' work. However, observations of lessons from leaders other than the headteacher are too infrequent. The school acknowledge that there is more work to do in involving senior and middle leaders more comprehensively in the schools' self-evaluation procedures.

Support from the local authority and from partner schools has made a satisfactory impact upon the improved performance of the school. Some elements of the support received from partner schools have had a strong impact, for example the coaching received by senior and middle leaders and opportunities for staff to observe outstanding teaching. The local authority statement of action meets requirements.

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

Jeremy Spencer  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2011**

- Accelerate pupils' progress throughout Key Stage 2 and raise attainment in English by the end of Year 6 to at least above average levels by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of work
  - extending opportunities for pupils to apply and develop writing skills in subjects other than English
  - strengthening the quality of teaching in English throughout Key Stage 2.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 2, by providing opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice in other schools and ensuring that in all lessons:
  - expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high
  - assessment is used to match tasks to pupils' abilities, particularly the more able
  - pupils' learning proceeds at a good pace.
- Senior leaders and managers should ensure that the priority areas for improvement are successfully implemented and that improvements are sustained.