

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Serco**
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct T 0121 683 3888**



15 June 2012

Mrs Lynn Small
Headteacher
Littleton Green Community School
Colliers Way
Huntington
Cannock
WS12 4UD

Dear Mrs Small

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Littleton Green Community School

Following my visit with Mary Hughes, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13–14 June 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 7–8 February 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers cannot be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Accelerate pupils' progress and their attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - improving their oral skills in explaining what they are learning in lessons and how well they think they have done
 - increasing the application of calculation skills in all their mathematical work and in other subjects
 - reinforcing their comprehension skills in reading fiction and non-fiction texts.

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by January 2013 by:
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics
 - extending pupils' prior knowledge and skills through challenging tasks that match the needs of all pupils and help accelerate their progress over time
 - eliminating unnecessary repetition of what pupils already know and can do
 - improving the deployment of teaching assistants so that they make a more effective contribution to pupils' learning and progress.

- Improve pupils' behaviour around the school by:
 - promoting respect for each other, all adults and the environment
 - teaching pupils how to make a positive contribution to the school's management of behaviour opportunities for pupils to become involved in their own learning and aware of the goals they need to set to achieve challenging targets
 - reviewing the effectiveness of current strategies for managing pupils' behaviour.

- Bring rigour and accuracy to the school's self-evaluation by:
 - focusing on evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress during lesson observations and in the scrutiny of their written work
 - sharpening the monitoring and evaluation skills of leaders at all levels.

Special measures: monitoring of Littleton Green Community School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 13–14 June 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers, members of the governing body, the Local Leader in Education and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last inspection, a teacher has left the school and another has returned following maternity leave. Changes have also been made to the structure of the school day in order to improve the play arrangements at lunch and play times. The school is developing a link with another local school that includes the involvement of a Local Leader in Education.

Achievement of pupils at the school

In most year groups, pupils are making better progress in lessons as a result of the improvements made to the use of assessment. Pupils' writing has improved most because this aspect is being addressed systematically through all subjects. For the majority of pupils, more modest improvements have taken place as regards reading and mathematics, although plans are being implemented to address this shortfall. Pupils' oral skills are improving because teachers are expecting pupils to explain their thinking more. Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have made notable gains in their reading and number work because of the regular one-to-one support being provided by skilled teaching assistants.

More effective adaptation to lessons is increasing the progress less able pupils make. The high expectation teachers have is also accelerating the progress more able pupils make. For instance year 6 pupils spoke with great pride about the opportunities they have to undertake work normally associated with secondary schools. The progress made by middle ability pupils is not quite so impressive because they do not have sufficient access to higher level work. The school is monitoring well the progress made by different groups, for instance those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, so that it can check how well it is closing the gaps in achievement that exist.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- accelerate pupils' progress and their attainment in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

Far fewer lessons are now inadequate, although pupils continue to experience too few that are good or better. There are strengths in teachers' questioning: for instance, many adopt strategies to ensure all pupils have to think about the key ideas. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson on inverse relationships, the teacher increased levels of engagement by requiring pupils to consider each other's explanations. However, the effectiveness of questioning was reduced at times because of an over-reliance on willing volunteers and insufficient use of paired discussion when important concepts were being taught.

In the large majority of lessons, teachers take care to avoid overly long introductions and pepper their lessons with reviews to clarify the required learning. In the more effective lessons, these reviews use examples from pupils' work to make it abundantly clear to pupils how they can excel. For instance, in a good Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher carefully selected pupils so very good practice was shared with the class. Pupils enjoyed hearing about what might be behind a great black door they found on a castle visit undertaken the previous day.

Teachers are now planning more work in direct response to assessments that have exposed gaps in pupils' learning and there is less repetition of work that has been previously undertaken. However, at times, the progress pupils make is limited because too much time is devoted to addressing these gaps. A minority of lessons were more effective because teachers were prepared to adapt their lessons very quickly in response to their ongoing assessments of pupils' learning.

The school has recognised the need to identify more clearly the outcomes for different ability pupils in lessons. There are inconsistencies in how well teachers are responding to this, caused in part by the existence of too many different planning strategies. All teachers are providing work for different ability groups. This worked best when pupils could make choices and select the work they found challenging. Middle-ability pupils indicated that they would like more opportunity to undertake higher-level work. The pace of learning observed in lessons varied a lot. In the good lessons seen, pupils worked at a fast pace because teachers took steps to increase the levels of motivation. For instance, in a good Key Stage 2 English lesson involving 'scanning', pupils enjoyed competing with each other to quickly identify key points in a text. Progress has been made in improving the use of teaching assistants. This is most evident where they are being held directly to account for improving the progress of named individuals through the reading and number initiatives. There continues to be some variability in how well teaching assistants are used in lessons.

The pace of learning often slows at the end of lessons because pupils have insufficient opportunity to consider precisely what they have learnt and to apply their learning. Teaching assistants are often under-used at this stage of a lesson. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, continue to have insufficient opportunity to apply their

mathematical learning. A notable exception to this was the involvement of lower junior pupils in analysing the data obtained through a recently completed whole-school reading survey. More use is being made of a wide range of texts in all subjects to enhance pupils' comprehension skills.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- raise the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by January 2013 – satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils were clear that behaviour has improved substantially since the last inspection. This improvement is direct result of the prompt action senior leaders took related to lunch and play times, and the review of sanctions and rewards. Younger pupils said they felt safer because they had more space now that older pupils no longer have the same lunch and play times. Pupils appreciated the increased fairness associated with how the school responds to the occasional incidents of poor behaviour. Plans are well advanced to implement additional programmes that aim to further enhance pupils' behaviour. Attendance and punctuality continue to be strengths of the school.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve pupils' behaviour around the school – good.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Senior leaders have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. The judgements senior leaders make about the quality of lessons are accurate. Greater rigour and accuracy have been brought to the school's approach to monitoring and evaluation. Crucially, there is evidence that they are now focussed on the key priorities that will raise standards. The school's development plans contain more challenging targets related to the proportion of teaching that is required to be good. The improvements made to behaviour and teaching are evidence that the school is beginning to increase its capacity to improve. Senior leaders are increasingly using data well to hold teachers and teaching assistants to account for the progress their pupils make. Although governance is a relative weakness, there are plans are to ensure robust arrangements are established to hold senior leaders to account.

There is evidence that leaders are improving teaching and learning through pertinent training, combined with a willingness to challenge any under-performance. Possibly the school's greatest current strength is the eagerness of all staff to respond positively to the feedback they are receiving about their teaching. Leaders are establishing an ethos that could lead to even more rapid improvement. There is a commendable buzz around teaching and learning.

Middle leaders spoke enthusiastically about their plans for school improvement. There are signs that they are beginning to develop the evaluative skills required to effectively bring about improvement. For instance, they are establishing more effective diagnostic assessments and have recognised the need to improve teaching so that middle ability pupils make accelerated progress.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- bring rigour and accuracy to the school's self-evaluation – good.

External support

The quality and impact of the external support has been good. Senior and middle leaders enthused about the insights already gained through the partnership with another local school. Staff are enthusiastic about the local authority consultant-led intense mathematics course that has just commenced in the school. The local authority has set ambitious improvement targets and, crucially, has recognised the key role it has in ensuring that more robust governance arrangements are established.