

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)



22 November 2012

Mrs Jayne Mitchell  
Headteacher  
Gosbecks Primary School  
Owen Ward Close  
Shrub End  
Colchester  
CO2 9DG

Dear Mrs Mitchell

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Gosbecks Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the local authority representative and the staff, parents and governors who helped me during the inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, members of the Governing Body and a group of parents and carers. A telephone interview was conducted with a representative of the local authority. Checks were made on the school's systems for monitoring the performance of pupils and staff. The school improvement plan was evaluated, taking into account amendments made following the last inspection.

### **Context**

There have been no significant contextual changes in the school since the inspection in September 2012. The leadership team consists of the headteacher, assistant

headteacher, special needs coordinator and three phase leaders, one responsible for reception and infant classes, one for Years 3 and 4 and one for Years 5 and 6.

## **Main findings**

School leaders and the governing body are keen to provide a good education by improving teaching, so that pupils make good progress. The school improvement plan has been amended to take into account the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Mathematics was already a focus, but additional action has been identified to improve the accuracy of assessment. A playground charter has been agreed with pupils and midday supervision has been increased to improve behaviour in the playground. The phase leaders have each devised action plans for their teams, linked to the main document. However, it is not clear who in the leadership team is taking overall responsibility for improving mathematics.

Lesson observation and work scrutiny has helped to identify some general areas for improvement, such as marking. However, there is not enough emphasis on issues specific to mathematics.

The governing body is keen to provide stronger challenge to senior leaders. Further governor training is planned and a new performance committee has been set up to monitor the school more closely. However, progress updates are not available often enough for this to be fully effective. In addition, the school improvement plan has some weaknesses that make it difficult to hold the leadership team to account. It is not always clear who is in charge of each aspect. The plan includes some targets for the end of year assessments, but does not break them down to provide milestones for each term or half-term.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the inspection in September 2012. Following my visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- Sharpen up the school improvement plan by:
  - setting more measurable targets, timescales and milestones
  - introducing more frequent assessment points so that progress can be checked more often to allow speedier adaptation of plans
  - giving responsibility for action points to named individuals and make it clear who is accountable for improving mathematics.
  
- Increase the impact of lesson observation by:
  - including more no-notice lesson observations to check on what typically happens in lessons.
  - using lesson observation and work scrutiny to identify more subject specific ways of improving teaching and learning in mathematics
  - providing feedback directly to teaching assistants to help them improve their effectiveness.

- Strengthen governance by:
  - making sure that governors receive regular and timely updates on measures such as pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and teaching quality, so they can prepare questions for senior leaders
  - commissioning an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. I will revisit the school in the Spring term to check again on progress and to look more closely at mathematics.

### **External support**

The school has arranged external support to strengthen its lesson observation programme. Its involvement with a local consortium of schools provides useful support, training and opportunities to see good practice elsewhere. The local authority has worked closely with the school in the past, but has had a lighter touch recently. It is due to provide training to increase governors' understanding of how to use data and challenge the school leaders. It has also agreed to commission a review to check how well the school identifies and deals with the needs of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**