

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

Direct T 0121 683 3288
Direct email: beverley.joyner@serco.com



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Mrs D Gayler
Aldeburgh Primary School
Park Road
Aldeburgh
IP15 5EU

Dear Mrs Gayler

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

Following my visit to your school on 11 December 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.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in 9 Oct 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. Documentation regarding school improvement and governance was scrutinised. All four of the school's classes were visited and particular attention given to pupils' learning.

Context

The headteacher is relatively new in post, having arrived in June 2012, just before the last inspection in October 2012. Two of the school's four teachers are recent appointments.

Main findings

Teachers now accurately and regularly assess how much progress pupils are making. This is giving them a good view of how well pupils are doing so that lessons can be planned accordingly. In the best sessions the teacher is able to pitch the level so

that all pupils are interested and have to think and solve problems, with those who need it receiving support as required. However this is not yet done consistently across the school and in some examples the learning is pitched at a level that is too easy. This situation is changing quickly. Much professional development has been undertaken by staff. The new headteacher now monitors aspects of teaching effectively, giving guidance where needed and managing staff so that their targets for improvement are clear and challenging. As a consequence, teaching is beginning to improve and the progress that pupils make is accelerating. Early indications are that the progress made up to Year 4 is better than average, but that this slows in years 5 and 6. Because of this the school is giving these pupils extra support in important areas of literacy and numeracy.

In lessons, pupils' often lack the skills to apply themselves to higher level work or tasks that demand them to solve problems. This is because in the past they have not been challenged to do this sufficiently often. The new headteacher and the chair of governors have recognised that lessons need to be planned to include such work. Some good examples of teachers enabling pupils to do this were seen, but this expertise has not yet been shared effectively.

School improvement plans are very good. They accurately identify weaknesses and strengths. Improvements points and targets have challenging deadlines and clear responsibilities. Governors have been closely involved in the self-assessment process and understand their school well. They currently lack familiarity with school performance data. This means that they have been too dependent on data and analyses provided by the headteacher. Therefore they have been unable to challenge performance, or the headteacher, independently.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- Modify the school's lesson observation system so that the extent to which pupils are challenged to work at higher levels is identified and the best practice can be shared.
- Ensure that at least two governors undergo training on the analysis of school performance data.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school has taken advantage of effective support provided by the local authority. This has been in the areas of management, planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, mathematics, pupil progress management and governor training.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector