

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 3258
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



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Elizabeth Ormonde
Micklem Primary School
Boxted Road
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 2QH

Dear Ms Ormonde

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

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The headteacher and inspector conducted a learning walk around all classrooms and discussed new structures and plans for January 2013.

Context

A nursery teacher has joined the school since the last inspection. There have been a lot of staff changes during this academic year, with almost all teachers and leaders being new to their posts. Next month will see the completion of these changes with the introduction of a new deputy headteacher.

Main findings

Leaders in the school have robust plans to make the improvements needed. Their early monitoring shows that their actions are beginning to have an impact. Teachers

are clear about priorities and new systems have been put in place to help teachers work towards these priorities.

Feedback to teachers following monitoring has been clear about strengths and weaknesses. Teachers have responded to feedback by reflecting on their teaching and working with their teaching assistants to ensure learning improves. Expectations are rising and there are more opportunities for pupils to complete quality writing.

The headteacher is ambitious for the school. The early actions she has taken have been successful. There have been many staff changes this year and the school remains in a period of transition. In January a full and permanent teaching and leadership team will be in place. Roles have been defined clearly and actions plans show how each person will contribute to the drive for school improvement. The new leadership has the backing of the local authority and governors. Many staff are new to their positions. This is the Headteacher's first headship and the deputy headteacher's first role at this level. Three teachers are in their first year of teaching. It is important that these people have access to the right kind of support and guidance as they develop a full understanding of their roles.

The governors are very supportive of the school and the direction leaders are taking. They check the work of the school carefully and have a secure view of strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is small and has two vacancies. This leaves them vulnerable when forming appeals committees. It is important that the governors have a clear strategy to ensure they can fulfil this role successfully.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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:

- Ensure new staff and leaders receive on-going support and induction so they can fulfil their roles effectively.
- Appoint two new local authority governors or ensure that the governing body has the agreement of the local authority to secure the services of other governors where appeals need to be heard.

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

External support

The local authority has supported governors in making key appointments. They have provided support and guidance to the newly qualified teachers. Consultants have worked alongside some teachers to improve performance. The local authority has a comprehensive plan to monitor and support improvements in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector