

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9169
Direct email: elizabeth.rashvand@serco.com

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Glenys Clifton
Carlton Digby School
61 Digby Avenue
Mapperley
Nottingham
NG3 6DS

Dear Ms Clifton

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Carlton Digby School

Following my visit to your school on 04 February 2013, 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 on 21 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher from the partnership school, Ash Lea Special School in Rushcliffe. The school action plan and lesson observation practice were evaluated. A tour of the school with the headteacher was also undertaken.

Context

A new member of the senior leadership team took up her role at the beginning of January 2013. There is already some evidence of impact in the areas she is responsible for. There are currently three members of staff on long-term sick leave.

Main findings

Senior leaders accept that the time and energy invested in moving into their new building has diverted attention from sustaining the quality of teaching at the school. The local authority prepared an action plan for the school prior to the inspection, which was adapted in the light of the areas for improvement identified. This is now the school's action plan; progress has been initiated in all three areas identified and the school's additional priority of developing behaviour management techniques. A partnership has been formed with an outstanding special school and a number of visits made. An initial meeting to consider changes in leadership responsibilities has been held with post-holders, and another is planned.

All staff have been observed teaching and feedback meetings outlining areas for development have been held in each case. Follow-up observations are planned for this term. Training in phonics has been arranged in a twilight programme. The governing body has undertaken a skills audit, is reviewing the school improvement plan and is involved in the discussions about revised leadership roles and responsibilities.

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:

- accelerate the development of a coherent and effective leadership structure that:
 - helps to hold all staff to account
 - provides appropriate leadership at all levels
 - supports the professional development of all staff

- strengthen the governing body through:
 - seeking additional governors with experience in improving schools
 - improving the skills of all governors in knowing how to hold the school effectively to account
 - devising a suitable governing body development plan.

HMI will provide additional support by seeking outstanding practice in special school governance with an aim of providing a training seminar for the governing body in how best to provide the support and challenge required by the school.

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

External support

The local authority had identified that the school was in need of additional support prior to the inspection. A partnership with a local, outstanding special school was put into place whose headteacher has undertaken several visits and spent some time

observing teaching and learning. This action has already had noticeable impact and the support is being well received by the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire County Council and as below.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA)