

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 9159
Direct email: lisa.parkes@serco.com



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Mostyn Mahoney
Headteacher
Tettenhall Wood School
Regis Road
Tettenhall Wood
Wolverhampton
WV6 8XG

Dear Mr Mahoney

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Tettenhall Wood School

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, two members of the senior leadership team, eight members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A learning walk was completed with the headteacher. The school improvement plan was also evaluated.

Context

There have been no contextual changes since the school's previous inspection in November 2012. Three senior members of staff remain on long-term absence.

Main findings

The headteacher and those with extra responsibilities have begun to make appropriate changes in the school. Together they have:

- drawn up an improvement plan with a list of actions aligned to the areas for improvement
- reviewed the effectiveness of the leadership in the sixth form
- employed an external consultant to help identify best practice from other schools
- implemented a more effective system to track rewards and sanctions for behaviour
- begun training to improve the teaching of English and mathematics across the school
- examined ways of improving how teachers assess and record pupils' progress
- reorganised the school day to increase the time pupils spend learning in lessons.

The senior leadership group intend to carry out a weekly review of the action plan with governors receiving monthly updates on the progress leaders are making in meeting their targets for improvement. However, those in charge of the school recognise that:

- an external review of governance has not taken place
- governors are not fully involved in gathering first-hand evidence of the impact and effectiveness of the school's work
- lesson observation and detailed scrutiny of pupils' work have not taken place
- teachers are not using pupil attainment information to make sure that all lessons are planned at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils.

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:

- work with the local authority in order to strengthen the skills of those who lead the school during staff absence
- increase the frequency of checks on the quality of teachers' work including lesson observations, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work
- make sure that the improvement plans clearly specify how and when governors will check on the effectiveness of the school's actions
- increase the governors knowledge of how to evaluate progress of low-attaining disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (DSEND)
- update the school improvement plan so that it makes explicit the required impact of the changes on pupils' learning.

HMI will

- identify outstanding special schools within the West Midlands, and offer to make contact with such schools

- provide the school with good practice survey reports on governance and the special educational needs review
- spend half a day working with the phase leader for primary.

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

External support

The local authority will be undertaking a review of teaching and learning later this week. It is planning to help the school recruit additional members of the governing body to strengthen its capacity to hold the school to account and particularly developing their knowledge of how to evaluate progress of low-attaining disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (SEND). Further support is required to strengthen the school's senior leadership during the period of prolonged absence of key members of staff. The local authority has also offered to help arrange for an external review of governance, should the school find it difficult to secure the support of a National Leader of Governance.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector