

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9159
Direct email: lisa.parkes@serco.com

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Mrs Patricia Davies
Interim Headteacher
Al-Furqan Primary School
Reddings Lane
Tyseley
Birmingham
B11 3EY

Dear Mrs Davies

Special measures monitoring inspection of Al-Furqan Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in November 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, another governor, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes in staffing at a senior level. In November 2012, the local authority appointed an executive headteacher, who is also a National Leader in Education, to support school leaders for two and a half days each week. The headteacher has been on personal leave since February 2013. The governing body have very recently appointed an interim headteacher to lead and manage the school on a temporary basis.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The local authority has taken swift and decisive action to strengthen the leadership of the school. The executive headteacher has provided stability during a time of change and is taking appropriate action to improve the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are now aware of their role in helping to raise pupils' achievement. Teachers have started to change the way they plan activities to better meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are also marking pupils' work more regularly and increasingly telling pupils how to correct errors. Communication with parents and carers has improved. Regular meetings are giving parents and carers the opportunity to raise concerns and school leaders the chance to discuss the actions they are taking or will take.

The school improvement plan is not fit for purpose. It has not been revised since the section 5 inspection and does not state how the school's current weaknesses will be tackled. The recently appointed interim headteacher is working with the executive headteacher and the local authority to revise the school's improvement plan. Although new to the school, the interim headteacher has a clear awareness of the school's weaknesses and the actions that need to be taken.

Members of the governing body are beginning to gain a better understanding of the school's strengths and areas of weakness because of recent local authority training. With support from the local authority, governors have set up a 'Task Force' group that will meet each half term to discuss the impact of the school's actions on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Despite these positive developments, governors remain confused about their statutory roles and responsibilities. On occasions, this is delaying decisions that school leaders and the local authority want to make to help improve the school. In addition to this, continuing friction between the governing body and the school, and the governing body and some parents, is inhibiting its ability to effectively support and hold the school to account. An external review of the governing body should be undertaken prior to the next monitoring inspection.

The local authority plan is suitably detailed. It has clear and measurable success criteria. The significant range of support identified for school leaders and staff is appropriate and contributing to the steady improvements in teaching.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector