

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 9160
Direct email: antony.grace@serco.com

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Carol McQuiggin
Headteacher
Lawley Primary School
Off Arlestone Lane
Lawley
Telford
TF4 2PR

Dear Mrs McQuiggin

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Lawley Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 24 January 2013 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority for coming to talk to me at such short notice. As part of this visit, the procedures for safeguarding pupils were checked and found to meet requirements.

Since the inspection in May 2012, two new deputy headteachers have been appointed to the school. One member of staff left at the end of the summer term. The school is getting bigger due to new houses being built in the area. In 2010, two new classrooms were built to cope with the growing number of pupils in the school.

As a result of the inspection on 17 May 2012, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

The headteacher and the governors, with considerable effective support from the local authority, have worked well together to establish some essential and previously underdeveloped systems. The three most notable improvements are the appropriate arrangements for checking on the progress pupils make in lessons and their workbooks; checking of teachers' approaches to planning lessons; and the compiling of regular and secure information on how well pupils are doing in a way that allows for easy analysis of their progress.

There is a developing sense of teamwork and most teachers are keen to improve their work. They are trying hard to improve planning, and their understanding of what is meant by good learning, as they are becoming more responsible for their pupils' progress. Teachers are getting better at identifying when the pupils are ready to move on to new learning in lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In most lessons seen, teachers had planned activities that were at the correct level for most pupils.

Good examples were seen of pupils using their mathematical knowledge to work out problems such as the total cost of a week-long visit to an outdoor adventure centre. The activity engaged pupils at all levels of ability, including those pupils who find learning very difficult. They were given the task of working out how much pocket money pupils would need to bring with them to spend in the tuck shop each evening. The most able were asked to work out hidden costs, such as how much it would cost to travel by mini-bus and to have fish and chips as a treat on one evening. However, other vital pieces of information were omitted so that the more-able pupils had to work together to find out through research all of the other costs.

Current work in books and in lessons shows that learning and progress in reading and mathematics is improving, with an increasing proportion of pupils making good progress. However, there are some gaps, particularly in writing. There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to produce high-quality writing. Nevertheless, some of the pupils' writing in Years 5 and 6 is good, particularly in the use of vocabulary, complex sentences and imaginative phrases. There is also an appropriate emphasis on using lively and imaginative words, which reflects the improvement in the quality of pupils' writing in these two year groups.

Some inherent weaknesses remain that prevent all pupils from progressing well. The teaching in some lessons observed in Years 1 to 3 was inadequate because teachers were underprepared. All pupils in these classes completed the same activity, which restricted the progress of average-ability and more-able pupils. Their work was not set at the right level of difficulty so they made inadequate progress. While checking pupils' workbooks, the HMI also saw examples of pupils completing activities that were too easy or too hard for them, especially for those who are the most able. Too much teacher talk in some lessons limited the amount of work that pupils could complete on their own.

There is no guidance to help teachers teach pupils' writing skills at the correct level of difficulty as pupils move through the school. Some teachers do not have a good enough understanding of how to teach writing, and some teachers introduced misconceptions, particularly in their teaching of verbs and adjectives.

The headteacher is beginning to drive improvements in the standards pupils attain. Plans to improve the school are checked regularly to see if they are working. However, written evaluations of the individual actions are not always completed, particularly when preparing for local authority and governor reviews. The headteacher visits classrooms more often to review how well pupils are doing or to

see if agreed actions are implemented correctly. More classroom observations mean teachers are regularly receiving useful feedback about their practice. However, not all visits are formally recorded and a record is not always kept of the assessment made of the impact of actions taken. This makes it difficult to show fully the progress made on all of the development points from the previous visits. There is still some way to go in making sure that the school has good-quality leadership. Some staff with extra responsibilities appear to be reluctant to implement agreed actions and do not always show that they have the skills required to check carefully enough the quality of teaching and to help teachers to become more effective.

Governance is effective. After the previous inspection, the governing body set up a committee to check on how quickly the school is improving. This committee meets regularly and its members are involved in gaining first-hand evidence, such as talking to pupils about their work and looking at the quality of work in pupils' books. Governors have introduced a policy to check on the work of the headteacher and to ask more searching questions. However, they do not check on the work of other leaders and teachers in the same depth, and some of these staff do not contribute well enough at the moment to improving the school quickly.

The local authority continues to provide substantial and timely support for the school. Officers make frequent visits and carry out detailed reviews of the school's performance through direct inspection. The local authority holds regular progress meetings to review progress against its well-focused statement of action and provides detailed reports to governors. The support and training offered by the local authority has helped to improve the teaching of mathematics, and further support is planned to improve the wider leadership team within the school.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012

- Improve the leadership of teaching and learning so that pupils achievement and the quality of teaching are at least good by:
 - giving teachers sharply focused priorities to improve their practice focusing on the impact on pupils' learning when observing teachers
 - using a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching over time.

- Improve pupils' progress to good by ensuring:
 - teachers match work in lessons more closely to learners' needs so that all pupils are challenged lessons proceed at an appropriately fast pace
 - when teachers talk to classes they do so efficiently and effectively so pupils have opportunities to develop their learning independently
 - teachers' marking is developmental and makes the next steps in the next steps in learning clear for the pupils.

- Drive school improvement rigorously by establishing robust quality assurance processes, setting challenging targets for all pupils and monitoring pupils' progress regularly to ensure they make good progress.