

Serco Inspections
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 01216 799164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



18 April 2013

David Godfrey
Highgate Community Primary School
Heathcote Drive
Sileby
Loughborough
LE12 7ND

Dear Mr Godfrey

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Highgate Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 April 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan, records of monitoring and other school documentation were evaluated.

Context

There have been no significant changes to the context of the school since the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require improvement.

Main findings

School leaders including the governing body have begun to take action in response to the findings of the last section 5 inspection. An action plan has been written by the headteacher which identifies the correct actions for the school to take. The local authority has arranged for a local teaching school alliance to help school leaders put

the plan in place. The action plan is not helping to drive improvement as swiftly as it should. This is because it does not identify starting points, precise targets which are measurable, or specific deadlines, for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' attainment and the rate of pupil progress for example. There are no regular, clear and measurable points along the way identified for leaders to check on the action plan's success and to help the governing body hold school leaders to account for the impact of their work. Never the less, teachers have already attended training to help them improve their effectiveness as have the leaders of English and mathematics in the school. The headteacher has appointed a consultant to help make sure teachers and teaching assistants are doing their best to help pupils to develop their understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) as quickly as possible. He has also appointed a consultant to help staff promote the speedy development of pupils' early reading and writing skills. The impact of this work has not yet been measured.

The systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and to make sure that all teachers are putting in place the actions that have been agreed have been strengthened but they have not been fully tested. For example, there is a new system to check that all pupils are getting written and verbal feedback that helps them to improve their work. It has been designed to show how well each teacher is putting each aspect of the agreed policy in place. Plans are in place to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to see what it is that the most successful teachers do to help pupils to learn as well as they can. These have yet to be executed. Monitoring activities across the school have not been planned in a structured and systematic way to ensure high expectations and that they are carried out with urgency.

The headteacher, supported by the governing body has made sensible plans to manage changes to staffing at the end of the summer term and the reorganisation of leadership roles to strengthen leaders' capacity to drive improvement. The governing body has reorganised its committee structure in order to be more rigorous in checking on the work of the school. Governors have received training on how to make better use of the information they receive about how well pupils are doing. However, governors' broader skills and planning for how they will check first hand on the school's work have not been developed systematically enough.

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:

- sharpen action planning to include the school's baseline, specific targets that can be measured and points in time to check on the success of improvement actions
- systematically identify and sharpen monitoring activities
- swiftly put in place a system to check on the progress that pupils make in understanding the sounds that letters make

- ensure members of the governing body have the skills and resources they need to carry out their role well.

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

External support

The Education Quality Advisor, recently appointed by the local authority is supporting the headteacher to strengthen improvement action planning. Due to the reorganisation of the arrangements for the way the local authority provides support, arrangements have been made for support to strengthen teaching and pupils' achievement to be provided through a local teaching alliance of schools. It is too early to see the impact of this work. Similarly, external consultants have been appointed to support the school to strengthen the teaching of phonics and other early reading and writing but this work is in its early stages.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector