

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 9162

Direct email: siobhan.garrattley@serco.com



22nd April 2013

Mr Ian Pinnock
Headteacher
Earls Barton Junior School
Broad Street
Earls Barton, Northampton
NN6 0ND

Dear Mr Pinnock

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Earls Barton Junior School, Northamptonshire local authority.

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 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, deputy headteacher, the local authority's school improvement officer, the Chair of the Governing Body and two class teachers. The school's action plan was evaluated and the inspector visited classrooms briefly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, during which time he talked with pupils about their work.

Context

The headteacher joined the school two days prior to this visit.

Main findings

The school's leaders, with the help of the local authority, have revised the improvement plan. It now includes clear targets to aim for that help governors and staff to measure the effectiveness of their actions. In order to sustain improvements to pupils' writing the staff need to check more frequently that all pupils are on course to reach their writing targets. There have been good improvements since the school's inspection. The deputy headteacher and staff provide more opportunities for pupils to write independently, resulting in demonstrable evidence of improving standards. The school improvement officer and local authority advisers are giving teachers clear pointers and strategies to improve the pace of learning in lessons. The inspection in November identified weaknesses in the way leaders were evaluating the quality of teaching. The actions taken since then and the guidance given by consultants are increasingly helping leaders to judge teaching accurately. However, there is still more to do to sharpen leaders' monitoring and evaluation skills so that judgements about the quality of teaching are securely based on the progress and performance of pupils.

There are good links between governors and staff who have management responsibilities. These enable governors to receive and analyse first-hand evidence of teaching and learning. For example, the governors' standards committee is increasingly receiving accurate assessments of pupils' progress. The support and training provided by a specialist literacy adviser is improving the teaching of writing. This support and guidance has energised the staff team so there is now a greater sense of urgency and a commitment from teachers to improve their teaching.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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:

- ensure that all pupils reach their writing targets by making more regular checks on their progress
- improve the monitoring and evaluation skills of senior leaders and governors so that observations of teaching and assessments of pupils' learning are always accurate and robust.

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

External support

The school is making good use of the support provided by external advisers and consultants, particularly aimed at improving pupils' literacy and writing skills, as well as the teaching of writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector