

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 0121 6799163
Direct email:
lewis.mackie1@serco.com

09 May 2013

Kate Ward
Headteacher
Shalford Primary School
Church End
Shalford
Braintree
CM7 5EZ

Dear Mrs Ward

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Shalford Primary School, Essex

Following my visit to your school on 9 May 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 23-24 January 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Checks were made on the school's systems for monitoring the performance of pupils and staff. The school improvement plan was evaluated, taking into account amendments made following the last inspection. A brief tour of the school was made, accompanied by the headteacher.

Context

Since the inspection in January, one teacher has returned from maternity leave, replacing two temporary teachers who job-shared. Part-time alternative provision is now available in a successful local school.

Main findings

The school improvement plan has been amended to take account of the January 2013 inspection findings. No major changes were necessary, because the strategy for improvement was already well established, based on accurate self-evaluation. The senior leaders have stepped up their efforts since the inspection. Teachers are making better use of time, keeping their introductions brief to allow pupils more time for independent work. Recent training for teachers and learning support assistants has resulted in more active lessons in which pupils 'learn by doing' and think more for themselves. As a result, more lessons are being judged as good and pupils are showing more enthusiasm for learning.

The impact on pupils' progress is mixed. The most recent assessments show that progress is good in mathematics in all year groups. However, progress still requires improvement in Years 4, 5 and 6 for reading and in Years 3 and 4 for writing. In such a small school, this situation can be remedied if only a handful of pupils are helped to catch up.

The governing body is becoming more confident in questioning the information it receives and in holding the school to account. This is because governors are being more active in visiting the school and in looking at pupils' work. However, these changes are very new and need to be sustained to have beneficial impact.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following my visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- speed up pupils' progress in reading in Years 4, 5 and 6 and in writing in Years 3 and 4
- sharpen the improvement plan by identifying which individual is responsible for leading each initiative, indicating when each initiative is expected to begin and the timescale for its impact to be evident
- increase the influence of lesson observation on improving the quality of teaching by providing more subject-specific detail in records of feedback
- strengthen the governing body by identifying a link governor for each initiative in the development plan and by commissioning an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. The school has agreed to provide regular updates on pupils' progress.

External support

The school is making good use of the external support provided by the local authority. This includes regular discussions with the headteacher and external

verification of the quality of teaching. Links are being developed with other schools to observe good practice. The headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body liaise regularly with other local village schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott
Her Majesty's Inspector