

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 9158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com

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Mrs S Marrow
Headteacher
Newdigate Primary School
Anderton Road
Bedworth
CV12 0HA

Dear Mrs Marrow

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

Following my visit to your school on 24 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. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the Chair and five members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated. I spent a short time in each of the classes in the school, during which time I talked to pupils and looked at their work. You and four senior and middle leaders took part in these classroom visits with me, and we discussed what we observed.

Context

Since the previous inspection building work has begun to create new nursery classrooms and to refurbish parts of the school. Several classes have been temporarily relocated and one of the playgrounds is out of use.

Main findings

You responded quickly and positively to the findings of the section 5 inspection. Your actions demonstrate a clear understanding of what needs to be done and a determination to make the school a really good one as soon as possible. The school's action plan is carefully focused on the key actions that the school needs to take in order to improve. Importantly, the success criteria focus on what staff will be doing if each action is successful and what the outcomes will be for pupils. This makes it easy for leaders and governors to see if each action is working or not.

The school has moved forward in several important ways since the section 5 inspection.

Firstly, the teaching of writing has improved at a good pace. You recognised that the lack of focus on reading whole books had meant that writing activities had become quite fragmented and that pupils could not always see the purpose of writing. Introducing the study of whole books, particularly from Year 3 upwards, has helped to make pupils really enthusiastic about writing. The stories that they read act as a great stimulus to their imaginations. As they have started to understand more about the purpose of writing, they have shown more interest in important aspects of it, for example the purpose of punctuation. Examples of pupils' writing seen throughout the visit were of a high quality, with good attention paid to accuracy and to presentation. Older pupils write at length. Extended writing is increasingly used across the curriculum, for example in science. There were many examples seen of younger pupils having the chance to write freely. For example in Reception, pupils were independently creating their own story booklets. Nursery children were seen writing the word 'alien' with phonetically plausible spellings. The learning environment has an excellent focus on writing and pupils' writing is displayed throughout. The 'writer of the week' awards are very motivating for pupils.

A second key improvement is in the way in which senior and middle leaders are working. They are taking firm leadership of the areas for which they are responsible. This is particularly evident in the Foundation Stage and in the leadership of writing. Leaders are no longer reliant on your direction. This is helping to improve the consistency of staff's approaches to teaching and to increase the pace of change.

Third, the quality, quantity and sharpness of your monitoring and evaluation have improved. You have a good knowledge of what is working well and what still needs further action. You give teachers clear written feedback on all aspects of their work, which helps them to know what they need to do to improve and enables you to know where support is needed. Senior and middle leaders are involved well in this monitoring.

The approaches used to teach mathematics have also improved, though not at the same rate as the teaching of writing. The new 'mathematics challenges', where pupils have a class problem to solve over the course of a week, are interesting and

pupils find them motivating. Problem solving activities are being used well in mathematics lessons in some year groups. However in some instances, staff are not confident enough to help the pupils to find appropriate ways to solve the problems. Mathematics does not yet have as high a profile around the school, for example in displays, as writing now does.

Governors have also taken a range of valuable and well-focused actions since the section 5 inspection. They have convened a new sub-committee to monitor the effectiveness of the action plan. They have created a clear timeline so that they know when each action should be completed and can therefore ask the school the appropriate questions about how well the actions have worked. They are making termly visits to the school to carry out learning walks in order to see evidence of the improvements. Importantly, they are holding all school leaders, not just you, to account for their work.

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:

- develop a succinct overview of the school's detailed data, to show leaders, governors and staff clearly the extent to which attainment and rates of progress are improving in writing, reading and mathematics and where any weaknesses remain
- ensure that where staff are using problem solving approaches in lessons, they are clear about possible solutions to the problems and confident about supporting pupils to explore different but plausible approaches to solving them
- explore further ways of helping parents and carers to support their children with mathematics at home.

HMI will:

- carry out a review of mathematics in the autumn term.

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

External support

The school is making good use of the support that has been offered or brokered by the local authority. Five staff are benefitting from an 'outstanding teacher intervention' course. The need for the school to present its data more succinctly and to further improve aspects of mathematics has been discussed during this monitoring visit and the local authority has immediately identified where and how this support can be offered.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector