

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 01216 799158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



14 June 2013

Mr Geraint Edwards
Acting Headteacher
Marriotts School
Brittain Way
Stevenage
SG2 8UT

Dear Mr Edwards

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Marriotts School

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, the headteacher (designate), a group of students, four members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school improvement plan. I visited a small number of lessons, accompanied by an assistant headteacher to gauge the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the previous inspection, governors have appointed a substantive headteacher to start in September 2013. Discussions are also underway about the school becoming a Sponsored academy.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders and governors responded quickly to the areas for improvement identified at the most recent section 5 inspection. You have produced a

detailed school improvement plan, which incorporates Ofsted's recommendations. It is clear who is responsible for leading improvements, and how often you will measure progress against the plan. Your plan identifies how you aim to measure the impact of your actions, but there are some missed opportunities to measure these against statistical information.

You have rightly focussed on improving the quality of teaching, and have put this at the top of your agenda. You are providing support for those teachers whose teaching is not yet consistently good. Teachers share good practice more regularly at staff meetings and briefings. Your visits to lessons now look for the impact this dialogue is having on the quality of teaching. Students confirm some improvements to the quality of teaching, but those I spoke to said that a number of teachers expect all of the class to do the same work. My visits to lessons and discussions with students show that books are marked regularly, but that not all teachers apply the marking policy. The current marking policy is too complicated, and would benefit from being simplified.

You have restructured the senior leadership team to create positions of responsibility which will target the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, you have also provided training to the heads of faculty and year, whose experience varies, to help them use the most up-to-date information on students' progress when setting targets.

The governing body, which regained their powers, in January 2013 is committed to securing school improvement. As a result of a recent internal audit of their existing skills, they are starting to ask more challenging questions, and develop a better understanding of their role in helping the school to improve. They have purposely sought new governors who have expertise of schools and sixth forms. They are also reviewing the use of 'link governors' to faculties and how these links can be best used. However, there is still a long way to go before governance is fully effective.

The number on roll in the sixth form continues to be small, and the choice of subjects offered by your school as part of the consortium arrangement for 2013–2014 is limited. Recent reviews of the effectiveness of the sixth form identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching and leadership. You are tackling this effectively by arranging for an experienced senior leader in an outstanding school, who is currently head of sixth form, to provide support and challenge for the head of sixth form at your school.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Make sure that the impact of every action in the school improvement plan can be measured easily whenever possible.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching.

- Review the suitability of the current marking policy with a view to making it simpler.
- Ensure plans are in place to expand the choice of subjects in the sixth form for September 2014, and encourage more students to aspire to join the school's sixth form.
- Strengthen governance by commissioning an external review of their effectiveness.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has a good understanding of the challenges your school faces, and has provided useful and continued support, particularly in English, mathematics and science through the deployment of consultants and advisors. They have strengthened the leadership of the school by appointing the Executive and acting headteachers, and hold leaders, and governors to account for school improvement through regular Action Group meetings.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector