

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 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



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Keith Richmond
Headteacher
Woodside Primary School
Jones Road
Goffs Oak
Waltham Cross
EN7 5JS

Dear Dr Richmond

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Woodside Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 July 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, seven members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. I also had a tour of the school, looked at pupils' work in English and mathematics and had discussions with those teachers with a specific leadership responsibility for these subjects and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Main findings

Under your good leadership the staff have been quick to address the key issues from the inspection. A comprehensive action plan provides an effective structure for rapid improvement. It clearly identifies who will lead each action, when each should be completed and who will monitor the impact of these actions. Specific targets linked

to pupil progress and timescales are set to measure improvements in the quality of teaching and achievement in mathematics. The senior leadership team has been quick to provide the necessary training and support for staff to accelerate the progress of pupils across the school. Other senior leaders and those with extra responsibilities contribute effectively to this improvement. For instance, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been quick to rectify those aspects of outdoor provision in need of improvement for nursery children.

Regular lesson observations by yourself and the deputy headteacher are eliminating weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in English. You undertake many of these observations jointly to ensure the accuracy of judgements. You identify the strengths and areas for improvement for each teacher precisely and the recording of issues for improvement is a good feature. Appropriate plans are in place to observe teaching in mathematics next term, focusing on the teaching of mathematical calculation.

Teachers throughout the school use the school's suggested format to plan lessons. Discussions with yourself and the scrutiny of pupils' books confirm that detailed marking and target setting are increasing the involvement of pupils in their learning. However, the impact of this marking on pupils' achievement is better in some classes than in others. This is because in the best examples, marking highlights misconceptions in English and mathematics and teachers provide extra tasks to move learning on. This is not the case in all classes.

Governors demonstrate greater awareness about pupil progress data and how it can be used monitor school effectiveness. Governors are yet to assess the performance of the school against the key issues raised at the last inspection through specific visits linked to the action plan.

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:

- eliminate any remaining inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' learning through specific monitoring to accelerate achievement in mathematics
- ensure that governors regularly monitor progress made on the action plan.

I shall make a further monitoring visit to review the progress the school is making.

External support

Local authority improvement officers maintain a close overview of the school to ensure that it quickly tackles the key issues from the inspection to secure the necessary improvements in pupils' outcomes. More specific support for the development of mathematics teaching and provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is planned for the next academic year.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector