

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T: 0121 679 9168  
Direct email: [beverley.joyner@serco.com](mailto:beverley.joyner@serco.com)



27 September 2013

Joanne Willcox  
Headteacher  
Hillhouse CofE Primary School  
Ninefields Estate  
Waltham Abbey  
EN9 3EL

Dear Miss Willcox

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hillhouse CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 September 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- ensure monitoring is used effectively to eliminate any remaining inconsistencies in teaching and accelerate pupil achievement in English and mathematics
- ensure that governors use pupil progress data regularly to monitor school performance.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, subject leaders for English and mathematics, five governors and a representative of the local authority. I also had a tour of the school and looked at some of the pupils' books. The action plan was evaluated alongside the latest monitoring reports by yourself and school improvement partner.

## **Context**

I note that three teachers left the school by the end of last term to be replaced by three new teachers at the start of this academic year. There is currently one vacancy on the governing body.

## **Main findings**

Under your good leadership the staff have been quick to tackle the key issues from the inspection. You have worked rapidly with staff and governors to implement a comprehensive action plan for school improvement. This plan carefully 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 English and mathematics.

In partnership with the school leadership team, you quickly provided the necessary training and support for staff to improve the quality of planning and marking of pupils' work. Discussions with yourself and my scrutiny of pupils' books confirm that detailed marking and target setting are increasing the involvement of pupils in their learning. In turn, this is accelerating their achievement because all pupils now know their targets and what they need to do next to improve. In partnership with your deputy you have been quick to address weaknesses in the provision for those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. As a result, teachers and their assistants now provide very specific support for these pupils in the classrooms to narrow gaps in achievement. I note from our discussions that you regularly observe teaching and learning in all classes. You have modified the techniques for recording your findings and reporting these back to the staff. However, the remaining inconsistencies in teaching across the school are yet to be fully eliminated because some of your observations lack a specific focus.

With the support of the local authority you rapidly implemented a detailed review of the governing body's responsibilities and procedures. My discussions with five governors confirms that they have a much better awareness of their own roles and how they can use pupil progress data to monitor school effectiveness and staff performance. However, a monitoring schedule is yet to be agreed and implemented to ensure that monitoring visits provide the necessary information for assessing the impact of the action plan on pupil achievement.

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**

It is good that you commissioned further support from the local authority improvement officers to provide extra staff training. You are also making effective use of a local leader in education to provide further training to yourself and other school leaders in monitoring teaching and learning across the school. Termly meetings with a school improvement partner and local authority improvement officers enable you to assess progress made against the action plan.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**