

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 9161
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



3 October 2013

Mrs Karen Hutchison
Marsham Primary School
High Street
Marsham
Norfolk
NR10 5AE

Dear Mrs Hutchison

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Marsham Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 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 April 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:

- Challenge pupils more often to think and work at levels that are higher than expected for their age, and in so doing allow them to work and solve problems independently.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the chair of the governing body, and a telephone conversation carried out with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. All 3 classes were visited to evaluate pupils' learning. Particular attention was paid to written work and assessment.

Context

The school is in federation with Hevingham Primary school which is nearby. The headteacher and her deputy manage both schools and there is a single governing body for both. Three experienced teaching assistants have joined the school since the last inspection.

Main findings

Since the last inspection the provisional results of the 2013 national assessments have become available. The number of pupils is small, with single figures in all year groups. Together with the school's own progress monitoring however, these indicate a rapidly improving trend. It is clear that standards in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1 are above national average, though below in writing. At Key Stage 2, standards are above average in reading and writing but just below in mathematics.

Pupils make better than expected progress in Key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is fastest in year 6. The significant proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium make better progress and reach higher standards than their peers, being on average one term ahead. Those with special educational needs make better progress than their peers because their needs are identified accurately and very effective support is provided promptly.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection. This is because teachers have undergone significant and relevant professional development, notably in aspects of the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Lessons are well-planned and based on accurate assessment of the standards that pupils have reached. All lessons seen were pitched at a level that was at least appropriate for the age of the pupils. In the best lesson seen the teacher was not afraid to challenge pupils to work and think at a level above that expected. This resulted in pupils discussing complex ideas and learning very well indeed. Children are proud of their workbooks. These are well-presented and neat with good-quality marking and comments from teachers.

In lessons, pupils behave well. They work quietly and carefully and are rarely distracted. However they are slow to develop skills of independent learning. This is because they are not always given opportunity to develop this important skill in class.

Leaders, working jointly between the two schools, are determined to improve learning quickly. Self-assessments and action plans are challenging and precise. Targets are clear and progress towards them is monitored effectively. This is because the school has accurate and systematic assessment to tell leaders how well groups of pupils and individuals are doing. The school's lesson observation system is excellent. It has been redesigned since the last inspection and now places a very good emphasis on what pupils learn rather than teacher activities.

The school has a skilled and experienced governing body. They have a good understanding of where improvements are needed because they are well-informed by managers and have a good understanding of school performance data. They challenge the school well although this is not always recorded in a way that can be easily checked at a later date.

External support

Through the local authority, the school has benefitted from extensive support especially in assessment and aspects of literacy and numeracy. The school works closely with a local leader in education who is the headteacher of a 'good' school.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector