

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 6799156  
**Direct email:** becky.dawson@serco.com



11 October 2013

Mrs Margot Brown  
Headteacher  
Priors Field School  
Clinton Lane  
Kenilworth  
CV8 1BA

Dear Mrs Brown

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Priors Field School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 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 June 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:

- particularly in mathematics lessons, increase the opportunities pupils have to make choices so they can concentrate more on work they find challenging
- ensure the headteacher's performance management targets fully reflect the overall improved outcomes identified in the school's rapid improvement plan
- develop partnerships so staff can learn from the good practice beyond the school and to increase opportunities for collaborative planning.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, your assistant head teachers, your mathematics leader, two members of the Governing Body, including the Chair, and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school improvement plan and scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of the governing body meetings, information about the progress pupils are making, the school's evaluations of teaching. I also made short visits to 7 lessons.

## **Context**

Your Chair of Governors resigned at the end of last term and is no longer a governor. A new Chair was elected early this term. Two new teachers have joined the school following the departure of one teacher and to cover maternity leave.

## **Main findings**

The school's provisional results in the 2013 National tests and assessments point to some improvement this year but pupils are not yet making good progress. A new marking and feedback policy has been implemented. This emphasises the importance of identifying the next steps in learning and that pupils should respond to teachers' comments. The school's monitoring, undertaken since the inspection in June, correctly indicates that there is some variability in how effectively the marking and feedback policy is being implemented.

You have introduced a number of new initiatives aimed at improving teaching and enhancing the progress made by pupils. These include a greater variety of approaches to questioning and strategies aimed at reducing the amount of teacher talk in lessons so pupils can devote more time to work that is matched to their needs. The school has developed a training programme in recognition that staff need further support to implement these new ideas. Teachers are using better starter activities that engage pupils at the beginning of lessons. Learning is being more regularly reviewed so teachers can check on pupils' learning. The school has recognised that these reviews could be further enhanced if there is a stronger focus on using pupils' emerging work to highlight key learning points. Middle ability pupils are being challenged more; for instance, they can undertake the work designed for the most able, although at times they are not able to move onto this quickly enough. Pupils are not able to make sufficient choices in their learning; for instance omitting questions in mathematics that they do not find sufficiently challenging.

Your 'rapid improvement plan' covers all the issues identified and contains admirably challenging targets, including some that can be used to check progress on a termly basis. Plans have been developed that will allow staff to observe effective teachers in the school. However there is a need to further develop partnerships so teachers can learn from the good practice that exists in other schools. In addition, teachers are not benefitting from the opportunity to plan collaboratively with teachers of the

same year group. Your governing body has acted quickly in commissioning an external review of its work. The review's recommendations are being implemented so that governors are much better placed to effectively hold senior leaders to account. The new Chair of Governors is very clear about the key information that governors require. Governors recognise that the performance management of the headteacher in the past has not focussed on the most important indicators and are determined to remedy this.

### **External support**

The local authority is providing appropriate support to the school; for instance its review of the governing body has identified the main priorities that will improve governance of the school. Regular local authority reviews of teaching are planned to check that staff can confidently demonstrate the new skills they are developing. These reviews will also provide the governing body with an external source of evidence about the progress being made.

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

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**