

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 9164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



5 October 2013

Mr Paul Henery
Acle St Edmund Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Fletcher Way
Acle
Norwich
NR13 3RQ

Dear Mr Henery

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Acle St Edmund Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 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 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:

- make clearer the improvements you expect to make by the end of each term, so that your monitoring and that of governors is sharply focused on evaluating the impact of continuing professional development
- share and spread the best practice in teaching that is developing, for example the use of targets in Reception and Year 1 and the use of the classroom as an interactive environment for pupils' learning, in Year 4
- use the success of your 'writing wall' that shows progress in pupils' writing from Reception to Year 6 to promote progression of skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects and disciplines.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, three middle leaders, four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school action plan, reviewed

monitoring records, analysed pupil progress data, scrutinised a sample of pupils' work and visited classes to see pupils and staff at work.

Context

Since the inspection, a new Deputy Headteacher has joined the school. A review of governance has been carried out.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you have:

- written an action plan focused on areas that require improvement
- analysed pupils' attainment and adjusted your plans accordingly
- developed a consistent planning format for teachers and support staff
- introduced a new teaching and learning policy
- planned collaborative professional development between staff
- observed all teachers jointly with a Local Leader in Education (LLE)
- agreed a programme of governor monitoring on 15 October.

Your work with staff and governors to develop a new teaching and learning policy has focused the school on your vision to enable pupils to 'learn more, think more and be more'. Staff are beginning to reflect these aims in their classrooms. The most stimulating help pupils access information and ask questions through effective use of displays and management of resources. Your recent lesson observations show that in some classes, such as in Year 4, this is promoting pupils' independence and improving the quality of their group work. Your plans to hold staff meetings in different teachers' classrooms, enabling teachers and teaching assistants to explain and evaluate their approaches, is a useful way of building on good practice.

You have widened the range of information you are now using to judge the quality of teaching. You are also finding your work with another headteacher very helpful to make sure that your feedback and judgements will move the school to good. Your new deputy's plans to strengthen evaluation between teachers complement this approach well. You have found that learning walks with a specific focus has helped to increase the proportion of good teaching since the inspection. For example, by giving attention to the deployment of teaching assistants you have seen more collaborative planning and class work between teachers and teaching assistants which is meeting different pupils' needs more effectively. The better progress made by the Year 6 pupils supported by pupil premium funding shows what is possible when staff use the additional progress data they now have, to target support.

Your 'writing wall' situated in the school foyer makes a strong statement to pupils, parents and carers that staff are promoting writing across the school. Although the quality of pupils' writing is still inconsistent, including handwriting, teachers' marking is giving pupils accurate feedback about what needs improving. More variable is the quality of teachers' guidance about how pupils could improve their work. All staff are using the new marking codes to signal the 'next steps' for pupils to take. However, because staff do not always phrase their words well pupils do not always take action by correcting mistakes or by responding to an additional challenge. Staff are also

missing some opportunities to raise standards by promoting writing and other literacy and numeracy skills within the context of other subjects. For example, pupils' fascinating art work exploring shadows, inspired by the artist Joan Miro. Creative writing in Years 2 and 3 inspired by a science theme of 'oceans' and an extended writing project in Year 5 linked to a visit to Norwich City Football Club show that staff are starting to address this.

The Governing Body has produced a strategic plan which shows how it will increase its level of challenge through the work of its three committees. Governors have planned a full day of monitoring activities focused on pupils' learning and achievement, to coincide with your first target for improved teaching. However, you have not included termly milestones in your action plan to help governors time their future visits.

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

You value the quality and range of support provided by the local authority since the inspection. As part of the 'Norfolk to Great and Good' programme you are benefitting from work with other headteachers in the locality. You are also looking forward to working with a National Leader in Education (NLE) through your link to the 'London Challenge'. In addition, you are working with the local authority to address specific priorities linked to improving English and mathematics. You have also found networks organised by the local authority, for example that for the Early Years Foundation Stage, a useful way of consolidating good practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton
Her Majesty's Inspector