

Serco Inspections
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

12 November 2013

Patsy Peres
Headteacher
Ramsey Community Junior School
Station Road
Ramsey
Huntingdon
PE26 1JA

Dear Mrs Peres

Special measures monitoring inspection of Ramsey Community Junior School

Following my visit to your school with Anthony O'Malley HMI on 11 November, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2013.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you and with other senior leaders, the Vice Chair of Governors and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

Following the previous inspection, three teachers have left the school and you have appointed two new assistant headteachers, who will join the school in January 2014. A new special educational needs coordinator has been appointed. You are currently also leading Ramsey Spinning Infant School and governors of both schools are considering forming a single school as a sponsored academy.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You and your leadership team are acting decisively to improve teaching and learning. By setting ambitious targets for improvement and challenging poor teaching you have set higher expectations which the majority of staff are committed to meeting. Crucially, you are taking appropriate steps to improve teaching in classes where practice is still not good enough and have made appointments which will strengthen further both teaching and leadership from January 2014.

Some of the actions you have taken are already having a positive impact. For example, changes to the structure of the school day have maximised opportunities for learning and, in response to concerns about lunchtime behaviour, you have increased the variety of activities available for pupils and employed additional lunchtime supervision. Behaviour has improved as a result. Systematic checks on the quality of planning, teaching and marking now take place. Your colleagues meet regularly to discuss the progress of each pupil and to identify support for those at risk of underachievement.

You are using the local authority's statement of action as a key part of your school improvement planning. However, there are inconsistencies between this document and school plans which weaken their overall value as guides for improvement. These inconsistencies include differing evaluations of the success you are having implementing the plan and achieving its targets. A further weakness of your improvement planning is a lack of clarity about how the actions being taken will improve outcomes for pupils.

Governors are providing vital support for the actions you are taking to improve teaching. They are also deepening their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because of the quality of information you provide through summaries of data on pupils' progress and attainment. Increasingly, governors are visiting the school to assess progress towards improvement-plan objectives themselves. Governors increasingly understand the need to ask challenging questions about the school's performance. An imminent audit of their own expertise will increase their capacity to fulfil this vital role more successfully.

Your senior colleagues spoke very positively about the support provided by local authority officers to improve the teaching of phonics (sounds and the letters they make), literacy and numeracy. Similarly helpful is the part played by the local authority in commissioning support from a National Leader of Education. This link is helping three teachers to improve their practice. The local authority produced a statement of action following the previous inspection. However, this plan requires

amending because its ambition for the school to be removed from special measures by July 2014 now appears unrealistic. For example, the plan set a target of eradicating all inadequate teaching by the end of October 2013. However, there are still classes where teaching and progress are inadequate. The statement of action also lacks clarity regarding by whom, when and how its impact will be monitored and evaluated. Sometimes the document suggests that both monitoring and evaluation activities will be conducted by the same people.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is not fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is not fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jason Howard
Her Majesty's Inspector