

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 9169
Direct email: mathew.mitchel@serco.com



11 November 2013

Lee Noble
Headteacher
Whitegate Primary and Nursery School
Middle Fell Way
Clifton Estate
NG11 9JQ

Dear Mr Noble

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whitegate Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 8 November 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 September 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 that plans for the professional development of subject leaders are put into action quickly
- ensure that the monitoring of the pupils' progress is sufficiently frequent to enable prompt and effective action to be taken on any emerging issues
- clarify the actions to be taken to develop the pupils' independent thinking and learning skills and to improve marking and feedback and the timescales for the actions.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, and a telephone conversation was held with

a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Also, I undertook a tour of all classrooms, guided by a group of pupils, with whom I discussed the improvements being made by the school.

Context

Whilst there have been no changes to the context of the school since the inspection five weeks ago, it is worth noting that a majority of the teaching staff is new to the school since the beginning of this term and includes six newly qualified teachers. Also, two of the three members of the senior leadership team have joined the school since June, one at the beginning of this term. The special educational needs co-ordinator is also new to the school this term.

Main findings

You have taken advantage of the opportunity brought by the significant changes in staffing and leadership to raise expectations and have increased the pace of change accordingly. The school improvement plan includes new priorities as a direct result of the areas for improvement identified by the inspection. The result is a greater emphasis now than previously on the pupils' progress and particularly that of more-able pupils, which is being discussed with the teachers more frequently and in greater detail than previously. The increased emphasis you have given to improving the pupils' achievement in writing, in particular, but also in reading, is having a good effect on the pupils. The pupils talked knowledgeably about the levels for which they are aiming and how those levels were challenging for them. The impact was evident also in the work being done in classrooms during my visit, where I saw pupils actively involved in learning.

The school improvement plan does not show clearly enough what action will be taken to develop the pupils' independent learning and thinking skills and to help the pupils improve and manage their own work, as a result of the marking and feedback they receive. As a result, there has not been enough progress yet with those particular things, so that the pupils were unable to tell me about whether they were able to work more independently than before, or that they are making more use of the marking and the feedback they receive.

Changes you have made to the way in which data about the pupils' progress are collated are helping the governing body to carry out its duties more rigorously than before. The governing body is checking on the pupils' progress more frequently. It is more knowledgeable about the pupils' progress as a result and challenging the school to take action more quickly, accordingly. It is setting high ambitions for the school to be outstanding, which is helping senior leaders to raise expectations in the school; as the Chair of Governors said to me, convincingly, when talking about the next inspection, "Good" is no good to us.'

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 are working closely with the Transform Teaching Schools Alliance and the Nottingham Learning Trust to get professional development for the staff. Plans for the professional development of subject leaders are still at an early stage of development, however, and so have not had any impact yet. The local authority has provided effective support for improving the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). There is not enough support for the school to improve attendance and punctuality.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottingham City local authority and as below.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector