

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 679 9146  
Direct email: [clare.benson@serco.com](mailto:clare.benson@serco.com)



25 November 2013

Mr D McMahon  
Headteacher  
Lindsworth School  
Monyhull Hall Road  
Kings Norton  
B30 3QA

Dear Mr McMahon

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lindsworth School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 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:

- ensure that the effectiveness of the school's action plan is evaluated at least twice termly, involving governors and the local authority's strategic group in the process
- use this evaluation process to decide on what additional support may be needed
- identify further ways to ensure that the importance of good attendance is promoted and constantly reinforced with all students as soon as they join the school, and that drops in attendance, even from a high level, are quickly acted upon
- scrutinise academic progress data across faculties in order to identify any patterns and anomalies in the progress individuals are making

- ensure that judgements on the overall quality of teaching take full account of the progress that pupils are making in each lesson and over time.

HMI will:

- visit the school again to carry out a work scrutiny and lesson observations alongside middle and senior leaders, focused on progress in English and mathematics, and behaviour and attendance
- lead a training session for the full governing body.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and your senior leadership team, a group of pastoral and academic middle leaders, the Chair and four members of the Governing Body, and a National Leader of Education who was the representative of the local authority. The school action plan was evaluated. You took me on a tour of the school and pointed out the ways in which the school has been reorganised since your inspection in July. I visited also five lessons, during which time I talked to students and looked at their work.

## **Main findings**

A scrutiny of data shows that pupils' overall academic progress last year was weak, particularly in mathematics. Attendance for this year is currently 65%, which is very low. Sixty seven of the 148 pupils on roll have attendance that is below 80%. You and your senior team are well aware that this is a low baseline from which to work towards being a good school, and have taken a series of well-focused actions which are enabling the school to move forward.

One important action that you took during the summer was to improve the school site. The addition of fencing at key points in the school has simplified the complicated layout, and has made it easier for staff to supervise. Your evidence suggests that as a result students are moving more briskly between lessons and there are fewer incidents at these times. You have also relocated the pastoral teams from outlying areas of the school to central bases, where they are readily available to support students and staff when they are needed. Staff are positive about the difference this is making to their work. In addition, there have been considerable changes to the inside of the buildings, creating more manageable teaching bases and new resource areas. The Intensive Support Unit is proving successful in enabling classes in the main school to be calmer and more challenging students to receive the support they need. The Mercury Base, for students who are more vulnerable, is not yet fully operational, but is another example of the way that you are taking positive steps to meet the individual needs of students and enable them to feel safe and able to learn.

You have introduced a new system to monitor students' behaviour on a lesson by lesson basis. The assistant headteacher in charge of this area can demonstrate easily how a student's behaviour is improving or deteriorating, and this is enabling the school to put in place strategies at an early stage. The senior team have discussed how best to bring this detailed information together with data about academic progress, and to identify patterns related to specific lessons or subjects.

A clear programme of monitoring activities has been created. This includes lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutinies. To date, the work scrutinies have focused largely on the quality of marking. We discussed the need to broaden these to take account of the progress that students are making over time, and across the curriculum. The action plan does not indicate how the overall effectiveness of your actions will be evaluated.

Middle leaders are taking a more prominent role in the school. Those I spoke to during the visit are positive about the direction the school is moving in and recognise the need for urgency. Faculty leaders are collecting data from their teams on a half termly basis and are supporting staff to set challenging targets for each student. They are closely involved in the 'raising attainment' meetings and feel both more held to account and clearer about their roles.

Attendance is a serious issue for the school. You have created a team who are focusing specifically on those with attendance that is below 50%. However, we discussed that more needs to be done to ensure that all students establish good attendance patterns from the outset and that all non-attendance is challenged.

Governors have allocated different roles to themselves to enable them to support and challenge the school. Governors do not have a thorough understanding of academic data and we have agreed that I will provide a training session to the full governing body as early as possible next term in order to assist them. During our discussion governors decided to link a new governor to the area of attendance in order to provide a good level of challenge and support to the school on this key area.

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**

The National Leader of Education who is working closely with you has a good knowledge of the school and understands the action it needs to take to improve further. During the inspection we agreed that her next visit would focus on attendance, as this is currently such a barrier to improving students' achievement.

The school is visiting other schools to look at various aspects of practice, particularly behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate