

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 9153
Direct email: naik.sandhu@serco.com



29 November 2013

Mrs Catriona Mugglestone
Headteacher
Merrydale Junior School
Claydon Road
LE5 0PL

Dear Mrs Mugglestone

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Merrydale Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 28 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. I also met with representatives from the governing body and your adviser from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement action plan was evaluated and pupils' progress records were scrutinised. I also looked at the records of the monitoring activity that subject leaders have undertaken since the previous inspection. I made a short visit to each class and spoke informally to pupils about their work. Some samples of pupils' work were scrutinised.

Context

Since the last section 5 inspection, two members of the teaching staff have left the school and one has resigned, effective from this December. Three newly qualified teachers have been appointed. School leaders have made plans to expand the number of classes in each year group. At the time of this inspection, changes to staffing had only made this possible in Years 4 and 6. Twenty new pupils have joined the school since the start of the school year.

Main findings

You and other school leaders continue to work with ambition and have responded positively to the findings of the previous inspection. You have drawn up an action plan that has appropriate actions and timescales. You are already using this to monitor the actions you are taking towards improving the quality of teaching and building the effectiveness of school leadership. You have improved the quality of information you have on the progress pupils and groups of pupils are making across all classes. However, you are not using the targets you have for the progress pupils should make to establish clear milestones by which you will measure the success of the actions you are taking to improve the school's performance.

You have provided staff with appropriate training, focused on improving planning and assessment practice. You are also giving teams of staff the opportunity to plan their work together, and this is ensuring greater consistency in the way teachers make it clear to pupils what they should learn in lessons. You and the deputy headteacher regularly monitor the performance of staff. You conduct a fortnightly book scrutiny and monitor at first hand, the quality of teaching in lessons. This has had a discernible impact on the quality of presentation of pupils' work. There is also a greater consistency in the helpfulness of teachers' written assessment. Teachers often give pupils very clear next steps through their marking and pupils are given the time to practise these before moving on to their next piece of work.

Subject leaders are taking full responsibility for driving improvement and monitoring standards in their areas. They are now involved in the meetings you have with teachers to discuss the progress pupils make. Because of this, they are now better informed and able to drive improvement in their year groups and subjects. Their reports to governors are detailed and outline the impact of their actions and the next steps they need to take. They have been instrumental in establishing the new reading programme and in reviewing other subjects to ensure that pupils have greater opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum.

Governors continue to provide school leaders with high-quality support and challenge. The information they receive on the progress pupils make has improved in its clarity. It enables governors to identify quickly the resources school leaders need to improve standards. Governors monitor the quality of teaching at first hand. They join subject leaders in scrutinising work and some observe learning in the

classroom. They support you well in establishing a culture of high accountability and no-compromise when it comes to the education and well-being of the pupils.

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

School leaders and governors all value the support they receive from the local authority's school improvement adviser. She knows the school well, and has regular progress meetings with the headteacher and governors. The adviser continues to conduct joint observations and book scrutiny with the school's leaders in order to secure a first-hand picture of the progress the school is making. Her work has strengthened the capacity of school leaders, particularly at the subject-leadership level, to drive improvement in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector