

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:** 01216 799162  
**Direct email:** siobhan.garrattley@serco.com



9 December 2013

Ms Sandra Hunter  
Headteacher  
Danesholme Infant School  
Motala Close  
Corby  
Northamptonshire  
NN18 9DT

Dear Ms Hunter

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Danesholme Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- secure the appointment of a Chair of the Governing Body
- ensure that the external review of governance is undertaken and that governors quickly develop their skills in being able to challenge and support senior leaders
- sharpen your school improvement plan so that governors are able to check more frequently the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement and hold leaders to account for the rate of improvement
- develop the skills of the leaders of Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage further so that they are able to be fully effective in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school

- ensure that the special educational needs co-ordinator checks more closely the extent to which individual educational plans and intervention programmes are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements
- ensure that teachers develop their skills in using their information about pupils' achievement in mathematics in order to provide work which challenges pupils of different abilities.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plans were evaluated. We conducted a tour of the school. I considered your most recent assessments of pupils' achievement. I looked at a range of pupils' books.

## **Context**

Since the last section 5 inspection, seven governors have resigned including the Chair of the Governing Body. Nine new governors have been appointed, five of whom have commenced their role. A new Chair of the Governing Body has yet to be elected. The governing body has appointed a new teacher to become leader for mathematics from January 2014 following the retirement of the present post holder at the end of this term.

## **Main findings**

You have given staff clear guidance on what you expect to see in their practice through the sharing of a set of 'non-negotiable' aspects of teaching. Through more frequent visits to lessons you are checking the extent to which these are being applied.

There have been some improvements to teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because there is a sharper focus upon providing children with more appropriate activities which they undertake independently. As a result, children are more engaged in their learning and they are developing their skills in reading, writing and communication more quickly.

Teaching is not improving quickly enough in Key Stage 1. This is because teachers have not improved their skills in assessing pupils' learning. Consequently, on a daily basis there has been little improvement in ensuring that pupils of different abilities are being provided with suitably challenging work.

Pupils' books show that they are not making fast enough progress, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are under-developed. This is because pupils are rarely given the opportunity in which to apply their skills in calculation in order to solve mathematical problems.

You have increased the opportunities for pupils of lower ability to be heard read on a daily basis and you have re-structured the school day so that pupils have more time in which to develop their skills in reading. Both approaches have helped pupils to develop their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) more quickly.

Leaders of Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage have developed their skills in checking on the quality of teaching through visits to lessons. Although they have provided staff with general feedback of strengths and areas for improvement, they are not drawing upon evidence from pupils' books and information on pupils' achievements in order to provide individual teachers with more precise guidance of how to improve. The special educational needs co-ordinator is not fully involved in checking closely enough the extent to which individual education plans and intervention programmes are having a positive impact on the rate of pupils' learning.

Due to the high turnover of governors since the section 5 inspection, the governing body has not yet undertaken the recommended external review of governance. Governors have introduced a school improvement committee which has clear terms of reference for checking on the rates of improvement. Governors acknowledge that that their skills in being able to gather information independently so that they are able to evaluate the rate of improvement remain limited. Your school improvement plan identifies appropriate actions. It does not however, contain sharp enough milestones or success criteria linked to pupils' progress and attainment, so that governors can check on the extent to which actions have been successful.

Younger children have benefitted from being taught how to play games. Consequently, they are collaborating with each other better, making playtimes a calmer experience.

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 local authority has brokered support from the headteacher of Kilsby Primary School. This has helped you to ensure that job descriptions are linked to teachers' performance management so that you have a more effective system of holding teachers to account.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, leader of Key Stage 1 and a Key Stage 1 teacher have benefitted from working with Brooke Weston Teaching School Alliance. This has helped to develop their coaching skills. The deputy headteacher and the leader of Early Years Foundation Stage have participated in a leadership course delivered by the local authority. This has helped to develop their skills in judging the quality of teaching through visits to lessons so that they can ascertain general strengths and areas for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

David Carter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**