

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 9161
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



14 February 2014

Joan Gibson
Headteacher
Oakham C of E Primary School and The Parks School
Burley Road
Oakham
LE15 6GY

Dear Mrs Gibson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Parks School

Following my visit to your school on 13 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 December 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 in the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit I held meetings held with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I observed teaching, care and children's learning in the Parks School. I evaluated the school improvement plan and looked at information about children's progress.

Context

The Parks School provides specialist nursery provision for 10 children with severe and complex learning difficulties. The children attend on a part-time basis. The school is federated with Oakham Church of England Primary School. The schools share a headteacher and governing body and they are located in the same building. Although they are separate schools they work increasingly closely together and,

since the inspection, there has been more collaboration between the staffs and leaders of the two schools.

Main findings

The staff have made a good response to the areas for improvement recommended in the previous inspection. As a result, those children who are able to learn without constant adult support are given more opportunities to do so. A deaf child, for example, spent a considerable amount of time experimenting with a vibrating toy, while a physically disabled child made her own choices of which area of the setting to visit using her mobility aid. Children who need it receive very effective support from adults directly related to their needs, for example, one young child responded enthusiastically to music activities that were part of her therapy, while another was observed making rapid progress in communicating with sign language.

The planning for children's learning and development shows more effective use of the guidance in the national Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The outdoor area is used very well to develop the children's physical skills, for example, in the use of large wheeled toys. The lead teacher and her team combine stimulating learning activities with high quality care and the outcome is a group of children who enjoy being at school and are achieving well. When I visited lessons in the primary school I saw evidence of the good progress made by some previous Parks School pupils in the way they participate fully in the same activities as the rest of the class.

The school is making good progress with its use of assessment information to plan learning activities. One important reason for this is its increasing integration with the primary school. Their improvement plans are part of the development plan for the whole federation, therefore more leaders with a wider range of expertise are available to provide guidance. The governing body closely monitors the impact of the development plan on the Parks School, ensuring that it leads to improved achievement by the children. Senior leaders support governors well in this by providing them with increasingly useful information about the gains in the children's learning and development.

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

Local authority support and challenge are good and used well by the school. The support from Early Years Foundation Stage specialists is particularly useful in helping the staff to improve children's learning. Local authority officers closely monitor the impact of the federation's development plan on provision in the Parks School. They correctly judge that the governing body and leaders are demonstrating capacity to bring about the required improvements, therefore they are happy to provide support as required rather than imposing it.

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

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

Her Majesty's Inspector