

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 9153  
Direct email: [naik.sandhu@serco.com](mailto:naik.sandhu@serco.com)



11 February 2014

Susan Gillott  
Headteacher  
Stanley Common CofE Primary School  
143 Belper Road  
Stanley Common  
Ilkeston  
DE7 6FS

Dear Mrs Gillott

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stanley Common Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report my 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.

This 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 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:

- improve the frequency and rigour of monitoring the school's work so that lesson observations, pupil progress data, work scrutiny, planning scrutiny and pupils' views help leaders to a better understanding of the quality of teaching
- use this information to implement a personalised professional development programme for staff, including the headteacher, that will focus on developing techniques that will have the biggest impact on pupils' progress
- explore linking the school with another local school so that leadership and teaching techniques can be shared and strengthened

- ensure that it is clear how progress in the school's action plans will be evaluated and reported to the governing body.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and another senior leader, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school improvement and action plans. I also toured the school and looked at the work of some pupils.

## **Main findings**

Leaders and governors have had a relatively short time to take action between the publication of the inspection report and this monitoring visit. The headteacher and the local authority school improvement adviser have worked hard to make plans to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement. These plans are detailed in their description of actions, some of which have already started, and have targets by which they can be measured. They are much less clear, however, about how they will be evaluated, by whom and when, so that the actions can be adapted in the light of progress. It is too soon after the inspection to be able to see the impact of this planning in better student learning. The marking policy has been revised, but is being inconsistently applied by teachers and is not making a big impact yet. For example, the approaches to correcting spelling were different in each class, in some cases, these approaches are not effective at ensuring that spellings have been learnt. Staff training to review the first few weeks of the policy and improve practice was scheduled for the evening of this inspection.

The headteacher, partly because she has taught most of them, has an excellent knowledge of all the pupils in the school. She can explain the details of their progress to date and their learning needs. She and other staff understand how to set high expectations for pupils. The pupils themselves, who said they were rarely bored and that their work was often very challenging, confirmed this. Older pupils knew what their targets were and could explain their current level of attainment. All pupils found it more difficult to explain exactly what they needed to do to improve, although they all knew that they did have particular skills to work on.

The headteacher has a programme of checking on the quality of teaching, which relies mostly on three formal lesson observations each year for each teacher. She and colleagues check pupils' work and she also regularly visits all the classes and talks with pupils. The information gained from these other activities, however, is not used well enough to provide a more typical view of pupils' experience and so enable a more accurate and detailed analysis of the strengths and areas for development of the teachers and teaching assistants. It has not been possible, therefore, to devise training that is specifically aimed at ensuring consistency where required or on those elements of teachers' skills and practice that would have the biggest impact in

improving pupils' progress. Although staff meeting time has been well used for general training activities, this lack of an individual approach has slowed improvement.

The former Chair of the Governing Body resigned for work-related reasons just prior to the last inspection resulting in the vice-chair having to take on the role of acting chair. Governors have arranged for an external review of governance and this will take place in mid-March 2014. Some governors have been involved in looking at pupils' work and visiting the school to observe learning. Governors are planning more visits this year. A significant amount of governors' time has been spent in the recent past dealing with some staffing difficulties, which governors accept has distracted them from a closer monitoring of the school.

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**

Following the inspection, the local authority has provided additional support to the school from the school improvement adviser and a teaching and learning consultant. School leaders have very much appreciated this, but it has yet to show impact in pupils' progress.

Because of the length of time that the headteacher has spent in this school and also her substantial teaching commitment, she has had limited opportunity to explore and share good practice with other schools. The same is true of all teachers who are not often able to discuss approaches to teaching in similar contexts. For this reason, I recommend that the local authority and school leaders seek a strong, local partner school for collaboration in leadership, monitoring and staff development activities.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire County Council and the Diocese of Derby.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**