

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 9166
Direct email: helen.johnson@serco.com



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Mr Peter Hollis
Executive Headteacher
Oakhill Primary School
Glascote Heath
Tamworth
B77 2HH

Dear Mr Hollis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Oakhill Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 March, 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 on 5-6 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 at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- improve teachers' questioning so all pupils have increased opportunities to think critically about key aspects of the lesson,
- identify more clearly the key indicators that will be used by the governing body to regularly check on the progress being made by different groups of pupils and
- ensure a review of governance is undertaken as soon as possible and quickly implement any recommendations.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other leaders. A telephone discussion was held with the vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative

of the local authority. The school improvement plan, information related to the tracking of pupils' progress and the minutes of the governing body meetings were evaluated. Short visits were made to seven lessons to observe teaching

Context

There have been no changes in context since the last Section 5 inspection.

Main findings

You are establishing a more effective approach to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in Year 1. As result of this improvement you are anticipating that far more pupils will reach the national expectations in the screening check that takes place in May. Throughout the school a strength in teaching, particularly in mathematics lessons, is that pupils learn quickly because no time is wasted on unnecessary consolidation of learning. However, you have also recognised that there are times when learning could be improved through more effective questioning that ensures pupils have to think more critically about the key aspects of the lesson content.

Your leaders are ensuring high levels of adherence to the school's policies. As a result pupils are making enhanced progress because teaching is better and marking is more consistent. Although this focus on ensuring consistency served the school well during the period when the school was in special measures you have correctly recognised that further improvement hinges upon leaders being more flexible and taking greater responsibility for bringing about improvement; for instance in building further on the very good assessment practice that exists in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensuring all subjects contribute more to the development of pupils' literacy. It was reassuring to hear how you are supporting your leaders in implementing their ideas for further improving your school.

Improvement plans are comprehensive and there is good evidence that you are regularly checking the progress you are making in addressing all the issues identified at the section 5 inspection. Sharp insights were evident in the monitoring you have been undertaking into the quality of teaching. A wide range of relevant assessment information exists and this is being used well by leaders in school to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and other interventions. Less clear is the key information that is to be used by the Governing Body to regularly check on the progress different groups of pupils are making. In addition, the Governing Body has been a little slow in organising the review of governance and implementing changes in response to this.

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

You are working very closely with nearby Hanbury's Farm Primary School because you also lead this school. This is providing opportunities for staff to participate in joint training and to share best practice across both schools; for instance, in the development of more effective questioning. The local authority has organised appropriate consultant support to help ensure the accuracy of key assessments in English and mathematics. The local authority has established regular opportunities to review the progress the school is making. It has agreed to keep HMI informed about the outcomes of these reviews. It would be helpful if additional support from the local authority could focus on further improving the effectiveness of the Governing Body.

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

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector