

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 6799163
Direct email: lewis.mackie1@serco.com



26 March 2014

Mandy Cherry
Headteacher
The Skegness Seathorne Primary School
Count Alan Road
Skegness
PE25 1HB

Dear Mrs Cherry

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Skegness Seathorne Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 March 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 in January 2014. 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 measures to:

- Make better use of the different ways that leaders check on the quality of teaching, by better diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers and teaching assistants so that training and development can be better tailored to individuals' needs.
- Ensure that targets for pupils' progress are sufficiently challenging, to enable the proportions of pupils making expected and better progress to be close to the national proportions for each level of prior attainment. Use this information to enable rapid identification of pupils who fall behind.
- Be more specific in development and action planning about when and how the governing body will receive professional evaluation of the school's progress.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you and the deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, four members of the governing body and the school improvement adviser to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's improvement and post-Ofsted action plans, records of governing body meetings, self-evaluation documents and records of quality assurance and pupil assessment. I also toured classrooms and looked at learning taking place and examples of pupils' work.

Context

Following the inspection in January 2014, which raised some serious questions about the quality of the school's governance, a representative of the local authority held some robust discussions with governors. As a result, the bulk of the governing body resigned. Since then, the governing body has been reconstituted with a smaller membership. Some former governors are on the reformed group, and recruitment is in progress to fill one final vacancy. An analysis of the skills and experience of the governors is underway and the new group has met three times. Two governors have taken it in turns to chair these meetings. Further training and development and the election of a chair will take place in the near future.

Main findings

The headteacher provides a clear vision and high expectations for staff, and there are many signs that the school is improving. During my visit, pupils' behaviour was excellent; they were polite, keen to learn and positive about the school. Rates of progress are improving, but leaders have been too focused on the proportion making expected progress and reaching age-related standards. Some pupils are capable of making faster progress, but the school's systems for checking will not identify this quickly enough to enable teachers and parents to spot if they fall behind targets that are more ambitious.

Leaders are checking regularly on the quality of teaching in the school, using a variety of methods in addition to lesson observation. Where teaching requires improvement, a programme of support has been implemented and more frequent checks made. This is starting to show some impact. There is still, however, a significant amount of variation between different classes. The information gathered from book scrutiny, planning scrutiny and checks on pupils' progress is not brought together well enough to enable leaders to help teachers identify exactly which aspect of their teaching needs to improve most urgently. This is inhibiting the rate of improvement in teaching, particularly that of raising the quantity of outstanding practice. The same is true for the work of teaching assistants, where greater detail in the analysis of strengths and weaknesses would enable a better targeting of training and development.

Pupils spoke positively about their learning. They said that teachers normally adapted work to make sure it was not too hard or easy. Some marking of their work was particularly helpful. Pupils explained to me how they were helped to improve by being made to look up incorrectly spelt words in the dictionary or by re-writing sections. They were also positive about when they had opportunities to mark one another's work. Most had a very clear idea of the specific writing skills that they needed to work on, but not all were sure about their current level of attainment across all their subjects.

The school's plans for improvement are detailed and address all the areas identified at the last inspection. At present, there is a school development plan, a post-Ofsted action plan and a separate school self-evaluation document. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and thorough, but there are insufficiently clear links between development and action planning and its evaluation. It is not clear exactly who will evaluate the school's progress for the governing body, or when governors should expect this to be completed.

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 school has made good use of additional time and support provided by the local authority. This has included more visits from the school improvement adviser and work with the governing body. The local authority also brokered support for the school from a National Leader of Education, who is the headteacher at Ellison Boulton Primary Academy in Lincoln. This has provided some valuable additional expertise to the school, helped in the coaching of teachers and is giving leaders opportunities to develop new skills and practices.

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

Yours sincerely

John Peckham
Her Majesty's Inspector