

Serco Inspections
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 9158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



Phil Sharrock
Kate's Hill Community Primary School
Peel Street
Dudley
DY2 7HP

31 March 2014

Dear Mr Sharrock

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Kate's Hill Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in February 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Dudley local authority name and as below.

Yours sincerely

Sue Barkway
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2013

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - teachers always set work at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils
 - pupils are not expected to spend too long listening to teachers
 - the marking policy is applied consistently so that all pupils understand how to improve their work and have time to respond to teachers' comments
 - pupils' behaviour is consistently managed by all teachers in accordance with the agreed school policy.

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - activities in lessons concentrate on improving pupils' basic number skills, spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - pupils have opportunity to practise and apply writing and mathematical skills in all subjects
 - teachers encourage pupils to work by themselves and complete tasks without always waiting for the teacher to help them
 - teachers give pupils clear models, setting out steps to follow when completing mathematical calculations, as well as examples of good-quality writing, so that pupils can refer to them when completing their own work.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - fully implementing the current plans designed to accelerate pupils' progress
 - making sure that the new systems for checking the quality of teaching are rigorously implemented
 - extending the role of the governing body in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - ensuring that all middle leaders are fully involved in checking school improvements and tracking how well pupils are doing.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 27 March 2014

Evidence

The focus of the inspection was on the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils.

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector visited eight parts of lessons with the deputy headteacher and she looked at pupils' work in books from all classes. In addition, the inspector reviewed school information on the progress that pupils are making.

Context

Since the last inspection, two teachers have left the school. These posts have been filled with members of staff who were already working at the school and, as a result, there have been no new staff joining the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders and managers have worked with enthusiasm to drive school improvements. They have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done and have taken a range of actions which are improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. Observations of the quality of teaching in lessons, combined with scrutiny of pupils' work in books, show that most teaching is now consistently good or better. As a result, the progress made by pupils is accelerating rapidly and there is a greater proportion of pupils in each year group who are working at or above age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Middle leaders continue to make a strong contribution to school improvement. For example, the phase leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage has worked with consultants from the local authority to review the organisation and teaching in early years. The balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities has been adjusted, and teachers plan activities which provide opportunities for children to follow-up their learning through purposeful play. This revised approach has resulted in a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and the progress made by the children, particularly since January.

Governors work closely with the school and are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development. They are increasingly holding the school to account through, for example, the challenging questions they ask and their programme for monitoring the work of the school. They have developed their own action plan and an annual cycle for evaluating progress made. The new Chair of the Governing Body has settled into the role well and is providing strong leadership.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- In most lessons, teachers set work which is at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils.
- There is much greater consistency in the quality of marking, particularly in English. As a result, pupils understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. The next step is to ensure that examples of good practice in mathematics are used to improve the quality of marking even further.
- Classroom and corridor displays are of high quality and teachers use them well to celebrate achievements of pupils, as well as providing stimulation for further learning.
- The behaviour policy is being used consistently and, as a result, behaviour of pupils in all lessons has improved.
- Parents are very positive about the effectiveness of communication and the ways in which the school responds to any concerns that they might have.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Although activities in lessons give pupils opportunities to practise their basic number skills, teachers need to ensure that pupils are also given regular opportunities to use and apply these skills.
- Data is not presented in a way that identifies the progress made by different groups of pupils, including progress made in relation to pupils' different starting points. As a result, it is difficult for the school to analyse the data to identify specific trends or to evaluate the impact of actions taken.

External support

The local authority has provided a good level of support to the school. Regular monitoring has ensured an accurate view of the progress made and helped to identify next steps for action. The on-going collaboration with five neighbouring schools has also been beneficial; for example, in providing opportunities for training and support and in securing greater rigour in the assessment and moderation of pupils' work. The local authority has also commissioned an experienced governor to mentor the new Chair of the Governing Body and external consultants to provide additional advice and support to the school.