

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: 01216 799164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



3 April 2014

Donna O'Toole
Wylde Green Primary School
Green Lanes
Sutton Coldfield
B73 5JL

Dear Mrs O'Toole

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wylde Green Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 April 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 at the recent section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of Hill West Primary School to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan, timeline of activities and progress reviews were evaluated. I informally observed lessons as you and the deputy headteacher took me around the school. I looked at pupils' books and the outcomes of monitoring activities undertaken by you and other senior leaders.

Context

The deputy headteacher in post at the time of the previous inspection retired at the end of December 2013. A new deputy headteacher took up his post from the beginning of January 2014.

Main findings

Since the inspection in December 2013 you lost no time in constructing a detailed action plan in response to all of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors. The first stage of the plan was implemented immediately on return to school from the Christmas break. You quickly demonstrated to other staff that you were embarking on a journey of school improvement with clear goals, specific actions and well-defined expectations and accountabilities.

You have identified supportive links with two other schools to help provide training and check that initiatives are implemented to the required standard. You have been careful to identify the necessary priorities to ensure that rapid improvement is brought about. You have arranged training for the whole staff and recognise that tailored support will need to be provided for individual staff in the near future.

You have introduced regular and rigorous checks on the work of staff which have included the examination of teachers' planning and pupils' work, together with formal and informal observations of lessons. These observations take into account previous improvement points and provide clear evaluations of teachers' strengths and areas for future development. The feedback from senior leaders demonstrates appropriate levels of expectation and identifies specific areas for improvement. You have established a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' rates of progress. Through this determined emphasis you have established teachers' clear accountability for pupils' achievements, rates of progress and quality of work.

Teachers' lesson plans are examined to ensure appropriate breadth, challenge and support for groups of pupils. Pupils' work is checked to ensure that training regarding marking is implemented thoroughly and consistently. Teachers' assessments are tested by other teachers and managers to ensure their accuracy. The assessments, once verified, inform detailed and rigorous systems to track pupils' progress. You and senior leaders have developed a forensic approach to the analysis of these data. You are able to account for the rates of progress of individual and groups of pupils; accelerate progress where necessary; and predict confidently the likely standards that will be achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in the 2014 assessments. All those who are in danger of falling behind are highlighted so that appropriate support is provided.

During the informal visits to lessons, it was apparent that not all teachers expect high enough standards of presentation in pupils' work. Nevertheless, pupils' books show a trend of improvement since January. Pupils' work showed the best progress where teachers plan an appropriate breadth of the subject, including in mathematics, opportunities to measure and solve problems. In these books, errors are consistently identified by teachers and corrected by pupils. Opportunities are provided for pupils to practise or develop areas for improvement and pupils are increasingly involved in identifying for themselves how their work can be made better. For example, one pupil correctly assessed her writing and wrote, 'I think my next step is to use some figurative language and a wider range of openers.'

With the support of the governors, you have established a new leadership structure so that expertise is utilised and middle managers are developed. These managers are beginning to appreciate their broader responsibilities outside their immediate classroom environments. They are increasingly able to monitor the work of others, share their expertise and provide targeted support. This distributed model of leadership and management has strengthened the leadership team and successfully secured the pace of change. Together with governors, you and the deputy and assistant headteachers have established a relentless drive for improvement but you have successfully taken staff with you. Everyone is aware of the necessary momentum but you are all on board and share the ambition and tenacity needed to succeed. Governors have formed a new committee to receive your reports of progress against measurable targets so they can evaluate the school's success. Their knowledge of the steps you have taken to date and the impact achieved, is impressive.

The school leadership team took rapid action to scrutinise the inspection report, seek appropriate advice and set out a draft school improvement plan. The plan includes all the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection report. All actions have precise, measurable and timed expected outcomes. The plan includes intended developments over a suitable period of time and evidence of improvement from a range of sources is clearly indicated. The overview of the school improvement plan is broken down to a weekly schedule of activities. The schedule shows well-defined focus areas so that all staff are well informed and prepared. Your system for monitoring and reporting the school's success in meeting the necessary improvements is clear-cut and straightforward. While none of the actions have fallen behind schedule, and all actions have been achieved or are in the process of being achieved, you have been careful to identify further initiatives to secure ongoing improvement.

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 local authority representative helped to identify available support from other schools. The local authority organised a workshop for you and other school leaders to better understand the process of being judged as requires improvement. She has led a number of meetings to review the planned actions and ensure appropriate support. Members of staff from Hill West Primary School have provided targeted and relevant support for middle managers to help them contribute to change and develop their understanding of leadership, improvement planning and project evaluation.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway
Her Majesty's Inspector