

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0121 679 9158  
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



1 May 2014

Mrs Patsy Peres  
Executive Headteacher  
Ramsey Community Junior School  
Station Road  
Ramsey  
Huntingdon  
PE26 1JA

Dear Mrs Peres

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Ramsey Community Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 29–30 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. 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 became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. 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 special measures.

The school may appoint one newly qualified teacher to provide additional support for pupils in any particular year group.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire.

Yours sincerely

Jason Howard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better by ensuring that all staff:
  - use assessment information effectively to set work for pupils that will move their learning to the next level
  - give pupils time to work on tasks and activities by themselves and in groups
  - ask pupils searching questions that help to develop their understanding and deepen their thinking.
  
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking by ensuring that teachers:
  - give pupils clear guidance when marking their work that lets them know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve
  - increase opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments so they can learn from their mistakes
  - learn from and adopt the most effective marking that exists in the school.
  
- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
  - teaching improves and secures consistently good progress year-on-year
  - teachers plan interesting activities that inspire pupils to learn and to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills when learning in subjects.
  
- Increase leadership capacity and the rate at which the school improves by:
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels, including the governing body, rigorously maintain the focus on improving teaching and check the effectiveness of their actions on pupils' achievement
  - developing the role of those who lead subjects in driving improvement across the school
  - establishing effective methods to keep parents and carers informed about how well their children are doing.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 29-30 April 2014**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, members of the school's leadership team, subject leaders and teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector carried out a number of joint lesson observations with the headteacher, and examined pupils' work, in order to make judgements about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil progress. Parental responses to the online Parent View survey were considered, along with the school's own survey data.

### **Context**

Additional appointments have been made to the teaching and support staff.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Overall, pupils are making better progress in reading and writing than at the time of the last monitoring inspection and the proportion of pupils attaining above average standards in these areas is growing. A significant proportion of pupils in most year groups are making slow progress in mathematics. Assessment information indicates that Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading and writing is at the expected level. Recent improvements in teaching have helped Year 6 pupils to make more rapid progress in mathematics, but gaps in knowledge and understanding remain and many are working below the level expected for their age. Year 5 pupils have made insufficiently rapid progress in reading and writing, and very limited progress in mathematics, because the teaching is not yet good enough. Recent and considerable improvements in teaching have enabled Year 4 pupils to make very rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics; many are attaining standards in each area above those expected for their age. In Year 3, both progress and attainment are at least in line with expectations. This is because teachers use their good understanding of what has been taught at Key Stage 1 to plan activities that build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding.

Teachers take part in regular moderation exercises and understand how much progress pupils should make. They make accurate judgements about the levels pupils are achieving and set appropriate targets. Almost all pupils are aware of the targets they are working towards and what they need to do within each lesson to achieve them. Increasingly, their progress towards these targets is evident both in their written work and the contributions they make within lessons.

Pupils who have special educational needs continue to make rapid progress because of the highly effective support they receive from teachers and other adults who

support their learning. The progress made by those who are supported by the pupil premium has accelerated since the previous monitoring visit because of the impact of the ongoing additional help that they receive.

### **The quality of teaching**

Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous monitoring visit, as evidenced by the observation of lessons, scrutiny of work in books and discussions with pupils about their learning. Some pupils are still making insufficient progress because of continuing weaknesses in teaching.

When teaching is most effective, teachers use assessment information effectively to plan activities that will move pupils' learning to the next level. Pupils enjoy engaging in imaginatively planned activities such as debates, discussions and solving real-life problems in mathematics. Teachers increasingly use questioning to assess knowledge and understanding, and to help pupils develop their thinking. During the monitoring visit, expert questioning encouraged Year 3 pupils to develop and assess arguments for and against the cutting down of the rainforests. Many were able to use sophisticated persuasive language to support their points. In one mathematics lesson observed, Year 4 pupils gained a rapid understanding of different units of measure through practical, problem-solving activities which engaged the interest and facilitated the progress of all. During a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used questioning to identify pupils' misconceptions and help them to find the most appropriate method to use. Pupils are used to practising their reading, writing and, to a lesser extent, mathematical skills when learning in other subjects. This is increasing most pupils' confidence in sentence construction and accessing information from more complex texts, although the comprehension and extended writing skills of Year 5 pupils are insufficiently well developed.

In a minority of lessons, pupils make more limited progress because activities are less engaging. Scrutiny of books indicates that pupils in Year 3 and Year 5 are sometimes required to complete work that is insufficiently challenging for them. Sometimes the pace of learning is slow, limiting progress because pupils spend too long on the same topic or activity. Leaders have provided ongoing additional training and support for Year 5 teachers to help them accelerate pupil progress in mathematics, and have put in place additional small-group teaching, but the impact of these initiatives is not yet evident.

Marking has improved overall since the previous monitoring visit because written comments offer pupils more precise and detailed advice about how they can improve aspects of their work. Increasingly, pupils respond and improve their work over time. The quality of marking is inconsistent in Year 5 and Year 3 pupils often do not respond to the feedback they are given.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are punctual, polite, keen to learn and hard-working. Attendance remains high and there is no persistent absence. The school's monitoring records indicate that, increasingly, pupils receive recognition for the effort that they apply to their work; during the inspection, pupils were enthusiastically engaged in their learning and keen to offer ideas and answer questions. They work effectively with each other, their teachers and other adults who support their learning. The standard of presentation and level of effort applied to written work has improved further since the previous monitoring visit. Teachers and leaders respond robustly and effectively on the rare occasions when behaviour disrupts learning. Pupils report that bullying is exceptionally rare and dealt with swiftly when it does occur. Pupils feel safe, the school is calm and orderly during break and lunch periods, and there have been no exclusions or serious incidents since the previous visit.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Many of the initial actions taken by leaders to bring about improvements have already had a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and the progress that many, if not all, pupils make. The headteacher and other senior leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of what has already been achieved, along with the challenges that remain and how these can be met. They set ambitious targets and provide extensive opportunities for teachers and others to develop their practice. Many of these initiatives are already having an impact on pupil progress. The work of teaching assistants is highly effective, and sharing the most successful marking techniques has improved the quality of feedback pupils receive. Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have evaluated progress towards improvement plans and set appropriate term-by-term targets. A whole-school focus on sentence construction has helped pupils improve the quality of their extended writing and 'booster' sessions have helped accelerate the progress of Year 6 pupils in mathematics.

Systems for checking on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil progress are well developed, and leaders respond swiftly to offer support and challenge when it becomes clear that standards are not high enough. Leaders have helped teachers identify precisely the remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, and plan activities to close them. Individual pupils who need help to catch up are now being identified quickly and supported.

The headteacher communicates regularly with parents, so that they know what their children will be learning term-by-term and how best to support them. Many parents regularly attend periodic 'pupil progress' meetings. Responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and to the school's own surveys indicate that parents are significantly more confident about the quality of teaching, the progress made by their children, and the leadership and management of the school than was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

Governors continue to provide effective challenge to senior leaders as they evaluate the progress of the school's plans, including during regular monitoring visits. As a result, governors have a clear understanding of the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils. They have supported additions to the teaching staff, ensuring that Year 6 pupils have had additional help to catch up in mathematics. This extra teaching capacity is now being used to help Year 5 pupils, but this support has been introduced too recently to have had an impact on their rate of progress.

### **External support**

The local authority has continued to provide helpful support for the school's improvement and to challenge senior leaders through regular evaluations and improvement group meetings. It has recently directed additional resources to facilitate the employment of an additional teacher to help pupils in Year 5 make more rapid progress in mathematics. Advisers in literacy and numeracy are continuing to work with teachers and leaders to identify, and plan activities to close, gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.