

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



3 July 2014

Mr Lee Venning
Headteacher
Heatherbrook Primary School
Astill Lodge Road
Beaumont Leys
Leicester
LE4 1BE

Dear Mr Venning

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heatherbrook Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. I wish to thank the acting headteacher for the help she gave me and for the time she made available to discuss the actions school leaders 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 March 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.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the acting headteacher and the local authority adviser. I also met with members of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plans were evaluated. I examined a small sample of pupils' written work and made short visits to each class.

Context

There have been no significant contextual changes since the last inspection.

Main findings

School leaders continue to drive school improvement with great determination. They have developed a new approach to teaching based on building collaborative learning in lessons. Whilst they have only piloted this in a few classes to date, the early signs are that this is encouraging pupils to remain more engaged throughout their lessons. Pupils report that they have to work much harder. Leaders have brought together a team of staff working across the school to develop new strategies for improving behaviour in all aspects of school life. New routines and systems have been developed and it is evident that staff are becoming more consistent in the application of these. A school-wide focus on improving handwriting skills is also starting to show improvements in the quality of pupils' written work. However, there is less consistency in the quality of marking as seen in pupils' books. Some teachers do provide clear written guidance, which pupils then quickly act on to improve their writing but, this is not yet evident across all classes.

Subject leaders are now taking full responsibility for driving and monitoring improvement in their given areas. They are making effective use of the school's tracking system to hold class teachers to account for the progress pupils and groups of pupils make. However, little progress has been made so far in terms of establishing a fully effective performance management system. The acting headteacher has gathered examples of practice from other schools, but her plans for fully embedding these systems are still in their early stages.

The Governing Body is a real strength of the school. They have acted effectively to prioritise finances to stabilise school leadership. Governors have reorganised their roles within the school improvement committee, and are now more focussed on key aspects of the school improvement plan. Additionally, a number of governors are actively involved in gathering first hand evidence of improvements. They visit the school regularly; observe learning, attend pupil progress meetings and local authority challenge meetings. This enables them to have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and to provide additional support and challenge as required.

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 has provided the school with highly effective, 'wraparound' support, and additional funding, that has focussed on building internal leadership capacity. The local authority holds school leaders to account through a regular panel meeting that brings together governors, school leaders and a number of additional advisers including behaviour support and education personnel.

I am copying this letter to Rob Osborn, the Chair of the Governing Body and to Elaine McHale the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services for Leicester City Council.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Darley
Her Majesty's Inspector