

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 0121 6799169  
**Direct email:**  
mathew.mitchell@serco.com

10 July 2014

Lisa Clayton  
Headteacher  
Oughton Primary and Nursery School  
Mattocke Road  
Hitchin  
SG5 2NZ

Dear Mrs Clayton

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Oughton Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in January 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated. The inspector visited classrooms with the headteacher to observe teaching and learning. The inspector also looked at records of monitoring activities and information about the progress pupils make and their attainment. The inspector scrutinised the record of safeguarding checks carried out on teachers and other staff.

### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, one part time teacher has resigned from September 2014, another part time teacher's fixed term contract is coming to an end in August 2014. One teacher has reduced from full time to part-time and has resigned as of 31st August 2014. All teachers have been replaced for September 2014. The leader

for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been taken out of class and is contracted for three days per week to focus on this area. Five governors have resigned and have been replaced.

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

Senior leaders, including governors, are ambitious for the school. They are clear about how weaknesses are going to be addressed; for instance, to improve the teaching of mathematics.

Because of higher expectations and staff training, pupils' progress has recently improved. The school provides additional support for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to help them catch up. However, early indications from Year 6 assessments indicate that achievement is still too low, particularly in mathematics. Too few pupils made the progress they should from Key Stage 1 or reached the expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 5, as well, the school's own assessments indicate that too few pupils are on track to attain Level 4 or Level 5 by the time they leave the school. More needs to be done to ensure that these pupils have the skills they need for the next stage of their education. There is a brighter picture in Years 2, 3 and 4, where achievement is improving and progress is better.

Elements of teaching have improved. Classrooms are well ordered and pupils are mainly focused in lessons. Behaviour is usually good, although the behaviour of a small minority of pupils causes concern. The school has systems in place to support these pupils. School leaders have set clearer expectations for teachers' marking, and pupils receive clearer feedback about what they have done well and what needs to improve. The school has introduced new teaching methods in mathematics to address pupils' needs, including the use of practical resources to help pupils calculate. The weakest teaching is being tackled, but not always with enough urgency.

With the support of the local authority, school leaders monitor teaching and learning. Teachers receive helpful feedback about how to improve. However, leaders' monitoring does not always fully consider the progress pupils make in their books or in lessons. Longer observations are followed up with regular drop-ins to lessons so that feedback to teachers is ongoing. Here, too, there needs to be more focus on the progress which groups of pupils make.

Regular meetings take place to monitor pupils' progress and identify additional support to help some pupils catch up. However these reviews of progress do not always precisely identify the gaps in learning or set enough challenging short-term targets. Some pupils receive additional help in small groups but this supported is not yet evaluated for its impact, nor is the effectiveness of the support teaching assistants provide in improving pupils' progress

An external review of governance has taken place and there have been changes; for example, to how meetings are organised and recorded to help governors become more focused. Governors receive up-to-date information and ask some searching questions. They recognise where improvements have been made and are keen to improve their own effectiveness. Governors do not always challenge the achievement data they receive rigorously enough. Safeguarding checks on adults working in the school are completed and recorded carefully and accurately.

The local authority monitors the school's progress and provides additional support to improve teaching and leadership; for example, of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Its work with the school to take stock of progress in July 2014 was, in part, helpful. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work did not analyse it well enough or provide enough guidance about how it can be improved.

The statement of action and school improvement plans are helpful documents and they generally link together well. However, some of the school's attainment targets differ between documents. The local authority's statement of action does not provide enough detail about how they will help governors to improve their effectiveness now that the review of governance has highlighted the areas for improvement.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**