

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 679 9168
Direct email:
narinder.kurana@serco.com



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Sarah Hobden
Headteacher
Castle Bromwich Junior School
Hurst Lane North
Castle Bromwich
Birmingham
B36 0HD

Dear Ms Hobden

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Castle Bromwich Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure all governors take up opportunities for training, in particular that offered for understanding progress data and attend all meetings fully briefed so that they bring an informed view and can take an active part in meetings
- ensure that the minutes of the governing body accurately record governors' challenge and the response from school leaders.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your senior leadership team, the Chair, and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement, the impact of performance management and the outcomes of monitoring activities. I also reviewed some of the school's achievement

data. I visited the majority of classes, talked to a number of pupils and looked at samples of pupils' books. I was unable to meet any Year 6 pupils because they were on a school visit.

Context

The former joint headteacher in post during the previous inspection has retired. His new role is as an associate headteacher in support of pupils in Year 6. There have been no other changes since the previous inspection.

Main findings

You and your staff are working with urgency to tackle the issues identified in the inspection. Your action planning has improved. Your plans are more concise and address the key issues. Actions are clearly identified and better matched to the timeframe in which you need to work and relevant staff are identified.

The monitoring of teaching is improving. You are developing the roles of senior and middle leaders. They understand what is expected of them. They now use a range of data to evaluate and monitor teaching in a timely way. You have higher expectations of teachers and their understanding and use of pupils' progress data.

Teachers' have higher expectations of what pupils can do and plan lessons to promote learning more rapidly. There is greater challenge for pupils especially those who are most-able.

Pupils' reading is improving because you are monitoring more closely the range of strategies that support reading. They are re-shaped when appropriate. You are able to more promptly identified pupils who are weaker readers and support them through well thought out interventions. Pupils are reading more frequently and read a wider range of texts across all subjects.

You have increased the resources to support mathematical understanding. Pupils are beginning to enjoy mathematics and can explain better how they have solved problems. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils could explain how they worked out their answer and used equipment to demonstrate how they solved the problem.

Governors' understanding of their role is improving. Governors who have had training are confident in challenging you. However, the governing body minutes do not fully record this. Too few governors come to meetings sufficiently prepared. Not all read the relevant papers beforehand. This limits their effectiveness to challenge you. The planned review of the governing body has not yet taken place.

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 school improvement advisor has an accurate view of the school and a positive relationship with school leaders. You and the senior team value his support. The local authority has supported your collaboration with local schools. This has enabled you to moderate your assessments of pupils' work. This is also improving the transition of pupils both into and out of your school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Solihull.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector