

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



10 July 2014

Mrs J. Collins
Acting Headteacher
Lindsworth School
Monyhull Hall Road
Kings Norton
Birmingham
B30 3QA

Dear Mrs Collins

Special measures monitoring inspection of Lindsworth 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 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2014.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the three assistant headteachers, a representative from the local authority, and three members of the newly formed Interim Executive Board (IEB). I walked around the school and visited some classrooms, where I talked to students about their work. I had informal conversations with several members of staff about their work this term. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

The substantive headteacher has left and you have taken on the role of acting headteacher. This was initially until the end of the term, but the agreement has been extended until the end of April next year. The governing body is no longer in place. An IEB has just been formed, following recent approval from the Secretary of State, and was due to have its first meeting on the day of the inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You are realistic about the extent of the challenge ahead, but determined that the school will improve and positive about what has been achieved already. You have gained the confidence of the senior leadership team, whose members have welcomed the clear direction you have provided. The senior leaders have continued and extended the positive work they were already doing. Where necessary, they have added to or refined their plans to try to ensure that change happens at an appropriately rapid pace. There is a clear focus on impact. Senior leaders are frequently reviewing the impact of their work, and identifying clear actions for the next steps.

You and the senior team have made it clear to staff and students what is expected of them by identifying a series of 'non-negotiables'. This clarity of purpose is having an impact on the staff, some of whom commented that they feel they are working better as a team. Better systems for basic day-to-day activities, such as breaktime duties, have helped staff to know what their roles are at different times of the day which, in turn, is giving students more consistent messages. Senior leaders have emphasised the importance of staff taking more shared responsibility for the school's work and this is beginning to be more noticeable. You are well aware that this aspect is not yet consistent and will continue to be a priority for some time to come.

Students are enjoying being able to see the 'league tables' of who has gained the most positive and negative points for their behaviour and attitudes to learning. A sense of healthy competition has begun to develop and staff report that students are starting to show some pride in their achievements. Pastoral staff are using the information from the points system more effectively to target their work. A significant effort is being made to 'catch students being good', recognising and praising where they are making good efforts with their learning and behaviour. The new system of daily telephone calls home to tell parents or carers when their child has done particularly well is well thought out and its impact is being well monitored.

You have made it clear to students that they must not smoke on the school site, and to staff that they must challenge smoking when they see it. Initially, this led to some students walking out of school when they wanted to smoke, but this behaviour has decreased and you report that more students are now complying with your expectations. Sanctions are in place for when students break the rule, but you are finding it difficult to secure support for the smoking cessation sessions which some students need.

Considerable efforts are being made to fill the gaps in staffing with staff of a suitable calibre. Temporary staff are being closely monitored and contracts are not renewed

if teaching is not good enough. At the same time, coaching and support is being given to staff who leaders think have potential to be good. A full staffing restructure is about to take place.

Relationships between the local authority and the school are much better than they were at the time of the section 5 inspection. A recent meeting between the school and a range of relevant agencies, such as the Youth Offending Team, identified ways in which the agencies could work with the school more effectively. The local authority has allocated an additional officer to liaise with the school about which students should be placed there, and to ensure that admissions are smooth. The local authority improvement adviser meets frequently with you, and there are suitable arrangements for the local authority to monitor the school's progress.

The poor state of the buildings and the large financial deficit remain a considerable issue. However, plans are in place for some improvements to the buildings over the summer, and there is more clarity between the school and the local authority about how the financial issues are to be managed.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. It makes it clear what actions have already been taken and how the local authority will monitor the school's work and the impact of its own actions. It does not fully reflect the extent of the additional support that has since been agreed and the local authority now plans to add this to the original statement to aid monitoring and evaluation of its own work.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose. It is clearly organised and includes all the areas for improvement that were identified in the section 5 report in March. It would benefit from the following improvements: adding evaluation questions to each section of the plan; creating a timeline showing which actions are due to take place at which time; and adding details of how the local authority will support as well as monitor each section. Governance arrangements were not in place at the time the plan was written. Now that they are, it would be useful to add how and when members of the IEB will be involved in monitoring and evaluating each aspect of the plan.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector