

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: 01216 799169
Direct email:
mathew.mitchell@serco.com



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Joe Purnell
Headteacher
Percy Shurmer Academy
Longmore Street
Balsall Heath
Birmingham
B12 9ED

Dear Mr Purnell

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Percy Shurmer Academy

Following my visit to your school on 16 September 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 academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and the Academies Enterprise Trust are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The academy should take further action to:

- ensure that pupils use mathematical language accurately so that they can explain their work
- ensure that pupils can accurately apply their mathematical understanding in other contexts.
- ensure that pupils understand the need for them to take responsibility for the toilets being looked after so that everyone is comfortable using them

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, Academies Enterprise Trust's (AET) regional director, phase leaders, pupils and some parents to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy's improvement plans were evaluated. I scrutinised a range of documents and visited ten lessons.

Context

There have been a number of changes to staffing since the recent inspection. There is a new executive headteacher. An experienced teacher, a newly qualified teacher and a new teaching assistant have joined the staff. Two Teach First teachers and a teaching assistant have left the school.

Main findings

You and your staff have worked with a renewed sense of urgency to tackle the weaknesses identified in the recent inspection. Your academy improvement plans reflect this.

Teaching is improving. The smaller groups in Years 5 and 6 for English and mathematics are helping pupils make better progress. Pupils with hearing impairment are benefiting from their inclusion in all lessons and from teachers' specialist subject knowledge.

Teachers' use of marking is more consistent. Both teachers and teaching assistants are more aware of how to give effective feedback to pupils about their work. Pupils' spelling and handwriting are improving. During my visits to classrooms, it was evident that pupils were proud of their work and were taking care with its presentation.

Teachers' are using information about pupils' progress more effectively. Work is better matched to pupils' starting points and is more challenging. However, in mathematics pupils are not sufficiently confident in using mathematical language accurately to explain their work. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in mathematics in other contexts.

Pupils stated that they felt safe in school, liked their teachers, their school meals and the new house system. Some pupils explained that the toilets were unpleasant. They stated they were smelly, sometimes had wet floors and some pupils did not flush after use.

The training of staff is improving. Through the re-shaping of the coaching system the academy's good practice is more effectively shared. This has enabled you to

identify a group of staff who consistently deliver high quality lessons. They are being used to drive further improvements. All staff have received training in talk-for-writing and are more consistent in their approach to developing pupils' writing in all subjects. Parents come into the academy to participate in some of these lessons. They commented on how pleased they were with their child's writing.

There is greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders and as a result there is greater accountability for the progress of all groups of pupils. The academy's monitoring systems are more rigorous. The staff from the academies in the cluster work collaboratively and quality assure each other's work. This mutual support and challenge has raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve.

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

As part of its interventions to strengthen leadership and management AET have reviewed the governing body and is replacing it with a management board. A new quality assurance framework has been introduced to evaluate teaching and progress more rigorously. Staff training and collaborative working across the AET cluster are strengthening the capacity of the academy to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector