

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 9164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



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Sarah Shirras
Headteacher
St William's Primary School
Williams Loke
Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich
NR7 0AJ

Dear Miss Shirras

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St William's Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 9 October 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 May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- strengthen its action plan by ensuring that a responsible person is identified for each action and that it is made clear when each action will be monitored, by whom and how you will know whether you have been successful
- ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good or better across all classes
- make sure that displays of work in classrooms help pupils find out things for themselves and supports further learning.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, Key Stage 2 leader and the leader for literacy, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. You also accompanied me on a walk around school.

Context

Since the last inspection, three teachers, including a new Key Stage 2 leader and three teaching assistants, have been appointed. There has also been a change of staffing structure. The school now has a deputy headteacher and leaders for the Early Years Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Four governors have left and there are two new co-opted governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. There are currently two governor vacancies.

Main findings

You have a palpable passion for the school and are unswerving in your determination for it to improve to good or better. Your deputy ably assists you, and you have quickly galvanised your senior leaders to support you in your goal. The school has swiftly put actions in place, which have already had some very positive outcomes. For example, a rigorous cycle of assessment and monitoring has helped to improve progress, particularly pupils gaining the higher Level 3 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014.

The school action plan is fit for purpose. Actions are linked to pupils' achievement.

The action plan lacks the details of who has responsibility for ensuring that each action is carried out. Specific dates set for monitoring activities to take place and who is responsible for reporting whether the actions have been successful.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is improving. Your senior leaders have clear roles and are involved fully in all aspects of leading the school because your vision and enthusiasm are effective in bringing people with you on the journey to becoming a good or better school. Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and what needs to improve. A system of weekly 15-minute 'drop-in' observations is now in place for all staff. Undertaken by a specific senior leader linked to year groups, outcomes of which are fed back to staff directly after the observations and development points are followed up the next week. These are already having some positive impact with day-to-day improvements in teaching and the outcomes for pupils' achievement. You recognise that this good practice must happen on a daily basis in all classes.

Some staff do not yet help pupils to find out things for themselves. In classrooms basics are in place such as labels on trays and books, but there is not always enough information to support learning or to celebrate pupils' work or achievements.

The school building is, in parts, rather shabby but you have clear plans in place to improve this, particularly the toilet areas where pupils have said they have been concerned by some inappropriate behaviour. You are having a substantial amount of building work to improve both this and to extend a library area. Pupils have had the opportunity to discuss their ideas for the building with architects in charge of the designs. They are very much looking forward to the changes in school.

Governors are aware that they have not always had enough grasp of performance data to be able to hold senior leaders to account. Importantly, they have done something about it. An external review of governance highlighted areas that the governors needed to improve, although many of these were in the process of being tackled by the new Chair and other members of the governing body. This is enabling them to increase the level of challenge in their questioning of school leaders and to ask the "so what?" question about the impact of the actions undertaken and what the next steps should be.

External Support

You have rightly taken advantage of packages of support provided by the local authority, these include 'Norfolk Good to Great', and a package brokered on your behalf with a National Leader for Education based in London. These have given you and your staff the opportunities to widen your scope for professional development and to be able to look at areas of good practice outside your local cluster.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspections.

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

Yours sincerely

Samantha Stewart
Her Majesty's Inspector