

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



22 October 2014

Nicky Sirett
Headteacher
Mersea Island School
Barfield Road
West Mersea
Colchester
CO5 8QX

Dear Mrs Sirett

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Mersea Island School

Following my visit to your school on 21 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.

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 that recently appointed teachers and new staff joining the school receive the support they need to establish themselves quickly and are able to make a significant contribution to the school's improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's improvement plan, performance data and an evaluation by the local authority were reviewed. You

shared with me the results achieved by pupils in this year's national tests. Walking the school with you enabled me to see pupils at work in lessons.

Context

Since the last inspection, the coordinator of special educational needs has left the school. A new coordinator will join the school next term. A newly-qualified teacher has been appointed to teach Year 5 pupils.

Main findings

Results in both key stages have improved this year. A higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 attained the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of more able pupils exceeding national expectations in reading and writing also increased. In Key Stage 2, a higher percentage of Year 6 pupils made expected progress and attained level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. Significantly, a much higher percentage of more able pupils attained higher level 5 in reading, writing and in mathematics compared to the previous year.

There was a modest improvement in the percentage of pupils passing the national grammar, punctuation and spelling test. A higher percentage of Year 1 pupils passed the phonics test but the overall pass rate is below that found locally and nationally. The attainment of girls was much higher than for boys in reading and writing. Data shows that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs made less progress than others. School leaders are aware of all of these issues and have incorporated actions to tackle them into their plans for improvement.

Your action plans are detailed and rightly focus on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, in particular improving the quality of teaching. These plans have been shared with staff and governors to make sure that everyone knows what they must do to raise achievement. Additional support has been provided to improve the teaching of writing in English and in other subjects. You and your senior leaders are evaluating the impact this is having on pupils' learning and progress. Staff training held this term has focused on what good teaching looks like and has helped to gain agreement amongst staff on the common features lessons should have to promote pupils' progress.

Visits to lessons by you and your deputy headteacher are becoming routine. They are providing you with the information you need to gain a full overview of the quality of teaching across the school, and to identify where further support is needed. You continue to work in partnership with schools in the local consortium to learn from their good practice and to help to validate your views on evaluating the quality of teaching.

Governors continue to provide you with their full support and challenge to help to secure improvements to the school. They have analysed the school's performance data and know where the strengths and weaknesses lie. They have formed a

working party to oversee the standards achieved and are monitoring the school's work through regular visits. This is providing them with a clearer understanding of what it does well and what it can do better.

External support

You are engaging fully with the local authority. They have provided you with a thorough review of the school's performance data, and additional advisory support. They are brokering further consultancy to enable you to improve the teaching of spelling and grammar and liaising with other schools on your behalf to provide your staff with further training opportunities.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector