

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 9161
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



13 November 2014

Mr Ashley Scott
Acting Headteacher
The Parks School
Oakham CofE Primary School and The Parks School
Burley
Oakham
LE15 6GY

Dear Mr Scott

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Parks School

Following my visit to your school on 12 November 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 2013. 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 'next steps' for children's learning are linked more closely to teachers' observations and that they are reviewed on a more regular basis
- simplify the presentation of assessment data so that information is clearer and easier for all members of staff and governors to understand and respond to.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, senior leaders, two members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last monitoring inspection. I evaluated

the school's plans for improvement and looked at planning documents and profiles of children's achievement. I observed a range of teaching and learning activities with the acting headteacher. These included small groups and one-to-one activities both inside the setting and outside.

Context

Since the first monitoring inspection, the previous headteacher has left and the deputy headteacher has become acting headteacher of the two federated schools (Oakham Church of England Primary School and The Parks School). The senior leadership team for The Parks School has been restructured and there is a new lead teacher and two new nursery nurses.

Main findings

You are leading the staff team with insight and dynamism and building effectively on the work of the previous headteacher. As a result, the staff team has a far greater knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. They are now providing a much better balance between activities led by adults and children's independent play. Staff are more skilled in enabling children to learn more for themselves through active investigations and exploratory play. For example, one girl with complex communication needs was able to delight in exploring the 'mud kitchen' independently outside. The teaching assistant used a skilful combination of key words and signs to describe what she was doing. After a sustained period of meaningful play, the little girl gave the teaching assistant eye contact and requested 'more' in order that she could have some more water.

Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to improve systems for planning. As a result, the setting now provides an exciting range of suitable activities which are enabling children to make good progress. Weekly and daily plans now effectively identify key activities and next steps for learning. However, these next steps are not reviewed frequently enough and are not linked closely enough to the regular observations which staff record in order to make teaching as effective as it could be.

The acting headteacher has continued to develop systems for tracking the progress of children. Termly meetings ensure that all senior leaders and teachers have a clear view of areas where children are achieving well and those where greater support or challenge is needed. As a result, planning is more closely linked to children's developmental needs. However, the school does not present data about children's learning over time clearly enough to enable staff and governors to understand the achievement of individuals and groups easily.

Leaders have worked hard to improve the school's systems for self-evaluation and they now relate closely to the outcomes for children's learning. They have made much clearer links between targets on the school improvement plan and performance management targets for staff. The acting headteacher is providing

effective challenge to staff through regular observations and informal visits to classes. He is not afraid to have challenging conversations in order to improve the quality of teaching for children.

Governors give effective challenge and support to the headteacher because they visit school regularly and now have a clear understanding of the priorities for school improvement.

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 partnership working between the school and the local authority's Early Years Foundation Stage specialist is continuing to bring about improvements in the overall quality of provision in the nursery. The local authority acknowledges that the pace of improvement has accelerated since The Parks and senior leadership team have been restructured. Guidance relating to improving the quality of children's play has been particularly effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Clare Cossor
Her Majesty's Inspector