

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 9154
Direct email: aidan.dunne@serco.com

7 November 2014

Simon Waltham
Headteacher
Cann Hall Primary School
Constable Avenue
Clacton-on-Sea
CO16 8DA

Dear Mr Waltham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Cann Hall Primary School

Following my visit to your academy on 6 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 academy 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 governors 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 the school's action plan addresses explicitly all the improvement points detailed in the previous inspection report
- extend the action plan to cover more than one term
- improve the action plan by adding milestones and deadlines, including measurable targets, adding suitable monitoring activity and ensuring that the role of the governing body is clear.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy, members of the governing body, the lead headteacher of the academy trust and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school development plan was evaluated and you took me on a tour of the school. You shared a number of academy documents with me and I checked the academy's single central register.

Context

Two teachers left the academy at the end of the academic year and two new teachers joined in September, one a newly qualified teacher. The existing assistant headteacher has taken on a lead role for behaviour and safety and a new curriculum and assessment team has been established. Two new governors have joined the academy.

Main findings

Standards are well below the national average. As this is a new academy, no data is available for previous years. However, when results are compared with those of the predecessor school, improvements in overall standards can be seen. The academy has been particularly successful in improving standards in phonics and results in the Year 1 phonics screening check were in line with the national average in 2014.

The academy has a school development plan in place that is aspirational and includes a range of appropriate actions. There is evidence that the plan was built on sound self-evaluation. However, you acted on advice to change your original plan and the current version does not relate explicitly enough to the improvement points from the full inspection in June 2014. The plan lacks deadlines and milestones, and targets that have been set are rarely measurable. It is unclear how the plan will be monitored and what the role of the governing body is in doing so.

You have rightly focused on issues around behaviour during the short time since the last inspection. An open morning for parents was held, including a tour of the school and an information meeting. The existing assistant headteacher took on the role of Behaviour and Safety Lead from September. The impact of these changes is already clear. There has been a huge reduction in the number of incidents, including more serious incidents, when comparing the first half term of this year with the same period last year. The open morning was very well attended and feedback from the session shows a high level of satisfaction amongst parents.

The academy has adopted the new National Curriculum and a new assessment system is already well established. You and your deputy are confident that staff expectations have already been raised. Pupils have their assessment booklets available to them at all times and are used to referring to them regularly. Pupils

were able to discuss their targets and 'next steps' with me confidently when I toured the academy.

A leadership audit has been completed and responsibilities have now been shared more widely. Leaders are now given regular release time, have greater focus on school improvement and are much more involved in the analysis of assessment data. Subject leaders have worked with the academy trust's lead headteacher on developing leadership skills and improvement planning. You told me that leaders are now more confident in their roles and are taking greater responsibility for developing their subject areas.

A teaching and learning coach is working with members of staff to improve links between assessment, planning and teaching. It is too soon to measure the impact of this intervention. New marking and presentation policies have been introduced and pupils' books show that these are already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Staff from the Early Years Foundation Stage have visited another school, to see outstanding practice, and you told me that you can already see improvements in planning and the speed at which staff move children forward in their learning.

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 academy is sponsored by a convertor academy that, at its last inspection, was also judged to require improvement. This initially limited its capacity and the support given to you, as a sponsored academy, has not always been as strong as it should be. However, since the appointment of a new lead headteacher, the support provided has been much stronger. The lead headteacher spends one day a week at the academy, providing additional capacity to allow you to focus on school improvement. The lead headteacher has worked directly with subject leaders and has also enabled specialist teachers to work with members of your staff.

Following the sponsor academy's requires improvement judgement, the local authority has had far greater involvement with the academy than would usually be the case. The local authority is providing good support and I know that this is something that you value.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the lead headteacher for the academy trust and the Director of Children's Services for Essex local authority.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy