

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



16 January 2015

Mrs Alison Turner
Acting Headteacher
Earls Barton Junior School
Broad Street
Earls Barton
Northampton
NN6 0ND

Dear Mrs Turner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Earls Barton Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2015, 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 June 2015. 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. This judgment is based on the most recent action since the first monitoring inspection. This increased rate of progress must be built upon and sustained.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher and other senior leaders; the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors; and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I observed two lessons jointly with the acting headteacher. I spoke informally with pupils and looked at their work. I examined pupils' books and scrutinised school documentation. The school improvement plan was evaluated. I checked the single central record.

Context

The headteacher is absent from school with a long-term illness. The deputy headteacher took up the role of acting headteacher in November 2014. The leadership team has been expanded and includes the mathematics and assessment leader and an English subject leader. A temporary teacher is covering the deputy headteacher's class. A new parent governor has been elected and a new local authority governor has also been appointed.

Main findings

The actions you have taken recently, to improve the quality of education, have begun to accelerate and become increasingly effective. While improvement plans are better, the planned actions still lack clarity in relation to measureable and clear success criteria. The governing body is more closely linked to actions. As a result, it is able to hold school leaders to account for their actions more fully.

Since the last visit, pupils' rates of learning have increased to a level that must be sustained, and built upon, in order to bring about the necessary improvements in reading, writing, and mathematics. You have set appropriately challenging targets for pupils in these subjects. As a result of this, and improved teaching, pupils' are working harder and are more focused on what they need to learn.

Subject leaders have improved their skills and they are now addressing weak teaching effectively. They are identifying more of the pupils who are falling behind in their learning and providing support for these pupils quickly. As a result, most pupils are now making at least the progress they should be.

The governing body has acted quickly to address issues raised at the last monitoring visit. It is using data better to challenge school leaders about improvements in the quality of teaching. Governors are better organised and take responsibility for different areas of improvement. As a result, governors visit the school more regularly and have a clear focus on checking the quality of school leaders' actions. They offer timely and appropriate challenge where it is necessary.

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 local authority is providing effective challenge and support to the school. It has brokered the support of a local headteacher from Wollaston Community Primary School. This support is being used effectively to evaluate the quality and impact of teaching. The acting headteacher has been quick to take this timely and appropriate advice and has used it to improve the quality of teaching effectively. The local

authority continues to provide reports that focus on the key issues. These help the governing body to challenge school leaders more effectively. The local authority has also supported the governing body through training for the chair and other members on the use of school data.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Connor
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