

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 9169
Direct email: mathew.mitchell@serco.com



9 March 2015

David Baldwin
Headteacher
Docking Primary School
Chequers Street
Docking
King's Lynn
PE31 8LH

Dear Mr Baldwin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Docking Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 March 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in December 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:

- include numerical targets in your improvement plans to enable you to measure and illustrate the impact of planned actions on raising achievement
- collate detailed records to show how the actions taken to support your least able pupils are leading to their improved progress.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, an interim headteacher, other senior leaders, a member of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school

improvement plans were evaluated. An opportunity to walk the school with you enabled me to see pupils at work in lessons.

Context

Since the last inspection a small number of pupils have joined the school following the closure of a nearby school. Plans are in place to federate with two other local schools in May 2015. Each school will have its own deputy headteacher and will be overseen by an executive headteacher. You intend to leave the school at the end of this term. Arrangements have been made for an experienced headteacher to lead the school on a temporary basis until a new executive headteacher is appointed.

Main findings

You and your governors feel there are no barriers preventing the school from improving quickly and being judged at least good at its re-inspection. All staff have responded positively to the inspection and are committed to securing long-term improvements. Staff morale is high.

Your improvement plans rightly prioritise strengthening teaching and leadership. They include clear actions and milestones to check whether improvements are being made. However, there are no numerical targets to enable you to illustrate that the actions taken are leading to sufficient improvement, particularly in increasing the effectiveness of teaching and the progress made by pupils. You feel that since the recent inspection, the teaching of most staff and the leadership of key areas has improved and is now good. Without numerical targets you are unable to quantify this fully or determine which of the actions taken so far have been most effective.

Middle leaders are responding positively to the increased responsibility given to them to raise achievement. Time is allocated each week to enable them to fulfil their management roles and to revise their plans for improvement. Their plans do include numerical targets, enabling them to show the impact they are having on leading improvement. Your leader of mathematics has a clear understanding of the improvements needed. Data are analysed thoroughly to monitor and evaluate how well individual pupils are progressing. Similarly, in the Early Years Foundation Stage your leader is well-organised, analytical and is driving improvement.

You and your middle leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching and are working alongside an external consultant to validate their views. Targets are in place to manage the performance of teachers but these arrangements do not currently include teaching assistants. Teachers' planning is scrutinised to ensure that learning builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Staff training is focused on giving pupils more opportunities to apply new skills in topic-work and discuss their findings with others. The next stage is to develop strategies that enable them to work things out for themselves, without the support of staff. In the Early Years

Foundation Stage, a renewed focus on the teaching of phonics is ensuring that children are better prepared for the next stage of learning.

Your current monitoring data shows that in Key Stage 1 the proportions of pupils making or exceeding the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics will be similar to last year's. In Key Stage 2, a larger proportion of Year 6 pupils is predicted to meet national expectations compared with the previous year. Most of them are also predicted to make expected progress in mathematics but not in reading or writing. You meet with each teacher every half-term to review the progress made by each pupil, including those eligible for additional funding, those who are disabled or have special educational needs. However, the progress of the least able pupils is not recorded in sufficient detail to highlight whether these pupils are making improved progress.

The Governing Body continues to question you about the school's performance and hold staff to account for making improvements. Governors feel that they are given enough information to help them do this. They make regular visits to monitor the school's work, including teaching. Middle leaders of core subjects are invited to attend meetings with them to share the work they are doing to raise achievement. Governors support fully the decision to federate with other local schools to ensure the strategic development of the school.

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

You are working closely with the local authority and value the support it is providing to help you to make improvements. Regular support from an external consultant has been brokered by the local authority to provide staff training and support for your middle leaders. The impact of this work is evaluated in detail by an experienced adviser to make sure that it is suitably targeted and leads to improvement. In addition, arrangements are being made with the leader of the Norfolk Good To Great initiative to secure further improvements to the school.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector