

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 9162
Direct email: peter.willetts@serco.com



11 March 2015

Shereen Kirk
Church Hill Church of England Junior School
Church Hill Road
Thurmaston
Leicester
LE4 8DE

Dear Mrs Kirk

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Church Hill Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to your school on insert date of inspection, 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 November 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:

- identify more clearly how governors will evaluate progress against each of the areas for improvement on the action plan.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members of the governing body. I also met with a local leader of education from the Syston and Thurmaston Educational Partnership (STEP) that the school is part of. I spoke on the telephone to the Senior Education Director from Leicester Diocese and to the school's independent education consultant. The academy's action plan was evaluated and a

range of other documents were scrutinised. I undertook brief visits to lessons, accompanied by the headteacher, and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books.

Context

A new teacher has been appointed to Year 5 from January 2015. The senior leadership team is currently undergoing restructuring.

Main findings

You have taken effective and appropriate action to address the areas of improvement identified in the recent section 5 inspection.

You have devised a detailed action plan that sets out in detail how the key priorities will be addressed and monitored. There are some minor amendments to be made. For example, although it is clear who is responsible for carrying out actions, and how progress is monitored, the role of governors in evaluating the impact of those actions needs to be made more explicit. You have agreed to amend the action plan to meet these requirements and submit it to me by 31 March 2015.

Since the inspection you have carried out a number of actions to strengthen the leadership of the school. For example, the review of governors has led to improvements in the way governors hold school leaders to account. You have used the review of pupil premium spending to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are receiving effective support to improve their achievement.

You are working closely and effectively with leaders from the STEP partnership to bring about rapid improvement to the academy. Together you have carried out two audits of teaching since the previous inspection that have enabled you to identify the key issues to improve, and to ensure that teachers receive appropriate support. Joint observations with STEP colleagues are helping to ensure that all leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of how to evaluate the quality of teaching. They now look at a wider range of evidence, and focus more closely on the impact of teaching on the progress that pupils make in the lesson, as well as over time. As a result, leaders are more rigorous in their judgements of teaching, and you have a much more realistic picture of the overall quality of teaching.

Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, because they now take more account of pupils' different starting points. In the lessons visited, it was evident that teachers are beginning to set more challenging tasks for pupils, and to ask more difficult questions of the more-able pupils. Questioning is used more effectively to gauge the progress that different pupils are making, so they can be moved on more quickly or given additional support. Teachers are using visits to partner schools to learn from best practice elsewhere. The training and development programme is ensuring that they put this learning into practice to improve their own teaching. Assessment of pupils' work is now more accurate, because teachers have

more opportunities to work with colleagues in school and in STEP to compare how these assessments are made and to adjust them if necessary.

New policies, for example for behaviour and assessment, provide greater clarity on daily classroom routines and expectations, and these are being used well to ensure that all teachers are now more consistent in the way they assess pupils, in the feedback they give to them, and in the expectations they have of pupils. A new reading scheme is teaching pupils how to be resilient and resourceful readers. A rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation ensures that all teachers adhere to the new systems, and allows you to monitor the quality of teaching on an ongoing basis. Teachers are clear about the standards expected of them, and how they will be held to account for these.

You have introduced a new tracking system to monitor the progress of pupils and of groups of pupils more closely. This allows you to intervene effectively with pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Learning assistants have a clearer understanding of their role in tracking the achievement of pupils.

External support

Governors remain committed to improving the school, and have drawn up their own action plan in response to the review. They have undergone training, for example in how to analyse data, and now have a clearer understanding of how to challenge school leaders on the information that is provided to them. They undertake regular visits to schools to ensure that pupils are making good progress. They have sensibly undertaken a skills audit to address their further training needs.

Academy leaders have engaged a range of external support to help bring about improvement. The Syston and Thurmaston Educational Partnership is providing effective and valuable support to both leaders and teachers. Frequent and focused visits to the school from fellow headteachers within the partnership have helped to ensure that the action plan is focused on the right priorities and has realistic but challenging targets for improvement. Academy leaders are held to account by the Partnership Board, who regularly monitor the academy's progress against these targets. Additional support has been secured from an external consultant, who is working with individual teachers and with key departments to further improve the quality of teaching. The academy uses the services of an education consultant, whose visits provide a useful external review of the academy's work. Further light touch support is provided by Leicester Diocese.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire local authority, and as below.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Duignan
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Leicester Local authority
- Leicester Diocese
- [CausingConcern.SCHOOLS@education.gsi.gov.uk]