

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T: 0121 679 9162  
Direct email: peter.willetts@serco.com



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Mandy Staiano and Angela Wallis  
Headteachers  
St Catherine's Hoddesdon CofE Primary School  
Haslewood Avenue  
Hoddesdon  
EN11 8HT

Dear Mrs Staiano and Mrs Wallis

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Catherine's Hoddesdon CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 31 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2014. 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. The school should take further action to:

- raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can do so that they consistently set work that provides pupils with appropriate challenge, particularly for the most-able pupils
- update the school's improvement plan to include the recommendations from the recent local authority review
- strengthen safeguarding systems around the management of the specific needs of individual pupils.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the school's two senior teachers to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. You took me on a tour of the school and I looked at a sample of pupils' books. The school improvement plan was evaluated and I looked at a number of other school documents. I checked the school's single central register.

## **Context**

Since my last visit to the school in December 2014 there have been a number of staff changes. Three teachers left the school at the end of the autumn term and these vacancies are currently being covered by long-term supply teachers. The substantive senior teacher has now returned to school following maternity leave. The Chair of the Governing Body has recently resigned his post and the Vice Chair is currently acting in the role.

## **Main findings**

After a slow start, senior leaders and governors are now taking more effective action to address the issues identified by the last inspection. It is crucial that this is now maintained and built on as we move into the summer term and beyond.

There is an increased sense of urgency to improving teaching and raising standards since my last visit. You are monitoring the quality of teaching much more frequently and you are using monitoring activity (such as lesson observations) more effectively. You provided me with the school's most recent assessment data for Year 6 pupils. This shows that this group is on track to exceed the previous year's results in the Key Stage 2 national tests and a higher proportion of the cohort are making better than expected progress.

Since my last visit you have increased the focus on improving provision for more-able pupils. You have ensured that teachers are fully aware of all pupils in their class that are capable of reaching the higher levels. You have focused your monitoring this term (including observations and scrutinies of pupils' work) on provision for more-able pupils. Local authority advisers have also provided training for staff in this area. You told me that you have seen improvements when observing teaching and when looking at pupils' work. I was able to see some improvement during our tour of the school and when I looked at pupils' books. However, this is not consistent throughout the school and more-able pupils are not yet making as rapid progress as they should be.

Safeguarding systems around the management of the specific needs of individual pupils were explored during this monitoring visit. It is clear that the school knows its pupils well and that interventions are put in place to address risks that may arise in

meeting the needs of particular pupils. However, the systems around such interventions should be strengthened further. For example, the school needs to be clear about when, and in what circumstances, it is necessary to undertake a risk assessment to meet the needs of specific pupils.

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 has continued to show a strong commitment to ensuring that this school improves. The improvement partner knows the school very well and provides an appropriate balance of challenge and support. The school continues to benefit from the involvement of specialist teaching and learning advisers. The local authority recently completed a thorough review of the school's progress since its last inspection. The direct involvement of the local authority's senior officers enables it to hold the school to account effectively.

The school is now receiving school-to-school support from an outstanding academy. Although this link is relatively new, it is clear that the support provided by the executive headteacher of the academy trust is already having an impact. The school-to-school support plan provides details of a range of appropriate activities that have already been carried out and that are planned for the future.

I am copying this letter to the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire County Council and the Diocese of St Albans.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**