

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 9167
Direct email: farhan.aslam@serco.com



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Christabelle Whiteley-Tye
Headteacher
Hopton Church of England Primary School
Coast Road
Hopton-on-Sea
Great Yarmouth
NR31 9BT

Dear Mrs Whiteley-Tye

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hopton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 22 April 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 January 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. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school development plan has specific, measurable targets for each of the priorities raised in the last inspection to show the impact senior leaders and governors are having on driving improvement
- review the roles of middle leaders to ensure that they have the time and resources they need to secure rapid improvements to all of the areas identified in the school's recent inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your deputy headteacher, two representatives of the local authority and four members of the Governing Body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and progress data analysed. An opportunity to walk the school with you enabled me to see pupils at work in mathematics.

Context

Since the last inspection, staffing has remained unchanged.

Main findings

You and your governors feel that at the recent inspection the school was judged to require improvement again due to the turbulence caused by significant staffing changes in 2014. This prevented you from making sustained improvements to the quality of teaching. Staffing has now stabilised and you are now in a position to begin to make teaching much more consistent.

Training has taken place to standardise the way teachers plan lessons, mark pupils' work and improve their teaching of mathematics. A wide range of new resources introduced into mathematics lessons are enabling pupils to work cooperatively together to solve problems and find out for themselves. This appears to be working well. You acknowledge that as this becomes established it will need to be thoroughly evaluated to ensure that it is enabling all pupils to make accelerated progress.

During our learning walk, all staff managed pupils' behaviour effectively. Most pupils behaved well. At times, some pupils became passive during long introductions to lessons or when teaching assistants did the work for them.

Teachers are planning different tasks matched to the abilities of all pupils, and manage their learning in groups with confidence. They are using assessment data to set pupils specific targets to improve their progress in mathematics. Marking is regular and is beginning to provide pupils with clear advice on how to improve their work.

The most able pupils are given more challenging work to do. However, they are not set clear timescales to complete tasks promptly and staff do not check regularly that all of them are working hard enough. Expectations of what these pupils are capable of achieving are still not high enough.

In the Reception class, children work and play together in a range of tasks organised within and outside of the classroom. We noted that they work purposefully and enjoy learning. Journals of children's learning are maintained well but do not include regular examples of their writing to show parents and carers how well they are

developing. The learning environment requires a thorough clean. Improving the outdoor area is prioritised in your school improvement plan.

Current assessment data shows that further improvements are urgently needed to the quality of teaching. In Year 2, most pupils are making expected progress but the proportions of pupils expected to attain higher Level 3 in writing and in mathematics are low. In Key Stage 2, the proportion of Year 6 pupils making expected progress remains low in mathematics. Your data indicates that this year, the percentage of pupils meeting national expectations in mathematics will be similar to last year's and that very few more able pupils will attain higher Level 5 in mathematics.

Your data also forecasts a significant gap between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils expected to meet national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics compared with other pupils. You have rightly prioritised an early review of the school's use of the pupil premium this term. Your school improvement plan does not have specific, measurable targets to show the impact you are having on improving the attainment and progress of these pupils.

You acknowledge that you and your deputy, and your wider leadership team need to quickly build on what has been achieved so far to accelerate the school's improvement if it is to be judged to be good at its next inspection. You have put in place a detailed improvement plan. However, not all of the targets set are precise enough to enable you to illustrate, at regular intervals the impact you are having on raising achievement.

Subject leaders are being provided with training and support to develop their roles. One of your middle leaders has responsibility for securing improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics, two of the key priorities identified for improvement at the last inspection. You and your governors acknowledge that this is a lot for one person to achieve in the given timescales.

An external review of governance is arranged for later this term. This will enable governors to gauge what they do well and what they need to improve upon, and to include clear priorities for increasing their effectiveness in the school's improvement plan. They have increased their support and challenge for senior leaders by asking them more questions about the school's performance and recording this clearly in the minutes of meeting of the Improvement Board. They are overseeing improvements to the school's website. A governors' newsletter has been sent to parents to keep them informed and to engage their support in improving the school.

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

External support

You are engaging fully with the local authority, including the leader of the Norfolk Good to Great initiative to help you to secure sustained improvements. A local authority consultant is visiting the school regularly to monitor the rate of improvement being made. You continue to work with other schools to share your good practice and increase your effectiveness in teaching mathematics. The local authority has agreed to review the teaching of mathematics later this term to confirm the quality of provision and the impact it is having on pupils' learning.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
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
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools