

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 9166
Direct email: jayne.coleman@serco.com



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Sheree Oxenham
Headteacher
Clore Shalom School
Hugo Gryn Way
Shenley
Radlett
Hertfordshire
WD7 9BL

Dear Mrs Oxenham

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Clore Shalom School

Following my visit to your school on 19 May 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 March 2015. 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:

- Ensure that criteria used to measure the school's success towards achieving the goals outlined in its plan for improvement are measurable and targets are quantified so that progress can be judged.
- Improve the quality of pupils' written work in subjects other than English, mathematics and science so that their work matches the standards they achieve in these key subjects.
- Develop senior leaders' team work by sharing good practice in methods used for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and, as a group, contribute to improvement work in Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Make use of Ofsted's reports and publications as examples of the best practice and sign up for seminars.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, leaders of mathematics and English, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We visited all classrooms together and I examined a cross section of pupils' work in Years 1, 5 and 6. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection one teacher and a learning support assistant are on long-term sick leave. A new teacher has taken over responsibility for leading the Early Years Foundation Stage. The recruitment process is underway to appoint two teachers for September.

Main findings

Senior leaders and governors have overcome their initial disappointment in the outcome of the previous inspection. They agree that they had lost sight of the importance of pupils making good, sustained progress. As a consequence, with renewed determination they are pressing on with work to restore the school to good and beyond in the shortest possible time. The school improvement plan is closely aligned to the key issues identified in the previous inspection. The actions outlined in the plan are designed to improve pupils' learning through good and better teaching. Even so, the criteria used to measure the school's success in achieving its goals are too broad to be useful. Specific targets for the amount of progress pupils should make are not specified as quantities.

Key leaders have a strong desire and the capacity to drive forward improvements in the areas for which they are accountable. For example, they have made a positive start in introducing the new National Curriculum and they are working with staff to develop new systems for assessing the progress pupils are making. All senior leaders are now involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. This places them in a stronger position to judge what is and what is not working well. There is work to do to develop this further as they are not sharing good leadership practice where it exists and learning from each other. Senior leaders' subject expertise is underused in driving improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are not making use of Ofsted's publications to inform them of the best practice that leads to good and better achievement in other schools nationally.

Writing across subjects is plentiful, especially in science, and showing signs notable improvement. Examples seen of pupils' written work show that many pupils have made good or better progress in their writing since the start of the year. Even so, the school's data show that this is not the case in all classes. The marking of pupils' work gives them clear feedback on how to improve their writing but comments are less helpful in how to improve their work in mathematics. In all books seen, pupils

are taking pride in the presentation of their work. Individuals are being rewarded through recognition of the special effort they are making to present their work neatly on a daily basis. Teachers whose practice is not yet good are being supported and coached suitably with an expectation for improvements to follow. Nonetheless, it will be important for them, ultimately, to deliver good teaching on a regular basis without dependence on others for support and direction.

Spaces for learning in the main building are generally welcoming, well organised and tidy. Improvements are evident in the early years under new leadership, especially in the Nursery class. Resources are organised so that they are accessible and the range of activities available for children to explore is wider. Established routines and adults' higher expectations have led to significant improvement in children's behaviour and in their personal development. Children in the Reception class are advanced in their acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills with plentiful opportunities to practice them. Resources for learning in the early years are generally dull and tired. The school is aware that investment is required to address this successfully.

The recommended external review of governance is underway. Governors are ambitious for pupils to develop as well-adjusted, thoughtful young people, well prepared for life in modern Britain, but also for them to achieve highly academically. You and other staff share this view and are acting on advice and recommendations from Ofsted and the local authority. Governors are developing ways to be less reliant on what you tell them about how well the school is performing. Visits during the school day are focused and purposeful utilising the skills of individual governors. The school is keeping parents informed of developments and improvements and most parents remain loyal supporters of 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

The local authority has increased the level of its support since the previous inspection. The school is receptive to the advice and is benefiting from school to school support to share good practice. The local authority's action group ensures that its support avoids duplication and importantly, that it is making a difference. The local authority will routinely undertake detailed reviews of the school's work at regular intervals.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector