

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



23 June 2015

Mrs Claire Pitt
The Russell School
Brushwood Drive
Chorleywood
Rickmansworth
WD3 5RR

Dear Ms Pitt

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Russell School

Following my visit to your school on 22 June 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 all pupils are adequately challenged, with high expectations expressed by teachers. The school has a high proportion of able pupils and teachers require additional support and training to ensure that their lessons enable all pupils to good progress.
- Ensure that changes to school policies and procedures all result in long-term, sustainable improvements for pupils and support staff's professional development and well-being.
- Develop middle leaders by providing them with the necessary skills and strategies to improve learning outcomes in their subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection meetings were held with you, other senior and middle leaders, representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. We carried out an extended tour of the school together and looked at the quality of teaching, spoke to pupils and looked at their books. You and your staff shared a portfolio of boys learning in Early Years Foundation Stage, examples of expected marking and the provisional achievement data for 2015.

Context

Since the section 5 inspection your Early Years teacher has returned from maternity leave. You have also recruited a School Business Manager and an additional Teaching Assistant. Subject leadership for mathematics, art and computing has changed.

Main findings

There have been significant improvements in pupil achievements throughout the school. This is reflected in the provisional 2015 attainment and progress data that indicates that national averages for 2014 have been exceeded in mathematics and English at each key stage, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff recognise that 2015 improvements are positive but do not fully reflect the abilities of all pupils.

Governors and senior leaders refer to a positive change in the culture of the school in the last academic year brought about by your leadership. The quality of teaching is improving; this judgement has been supported by observations carried out by the local authority. In my discussions with staff, they presented as reflective practitioners who are developing effective teaching strategies and learning to use data to support their teaching. Teachers are receptive to the changes brought about by the headteacher and can describe the positive impact the changes have had on their teaching and pupils' learning.

The school's marking and feedback procedures are evident in all pupil books. Pupils know their targets for improvement and find helpful the written responses from teachers helpful.

Behaviour expectations are uniform throughout the school and follow the agreed policy and procedures. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. They recognise the kudos in school rewards and the consequences of sanctions. During the tour of the school, all pupils were listening and responding to their teachers and there was no disruption to learning.

Provision in Early Years Foundation Stage is strong. Children were fully engaged in their child initiated learning, during the visit. The activities available were stimulating and had clear links to the curriculum; many activities had been adapted in response

to children's comments and ideas. Staff are aware of the continued need to focus on boys' progress and the activities available reflect this.

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 worked closely with the school and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Additional support and training has been given to the new headteacher, governors, middle leaders and teachers. This has had a direct impact on improving pupils' learning outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Pargeter

Associate Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy