

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 9154
Direct email: aidan.dunne@serco.com



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Jillian Davis
Headteacher
Terrington St John Primary School
School Road
Terrington St John
Wisbech
PE14 7SG

Dear Ms Davis

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Terrington St John Primary School

Following my visit to your school, with Ruth Brock HMI, on 24 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:

- improve the action plan by ensuring that success criteria are precise and measurable
- extend the action plan to plot the improvements needed to take the school from requires improvement to good at its next inspection
- ensure that the action plan contains sufficient detail, specific to the school rather than relating to the federation as a whole, to be an effective tool to guide school improvement
- manage the induction of the new teaching team to ensure that momentum in school improvement is maintained and built on.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, one of the deputy headteachers and members of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. The school's action plan and improvement plan were evaluated and you took me on a tour of the school.

Context

There have been no changes in staff or other significant changes since the inspection.

Main findings

Although pleased to have moved the school out of special measures, school leaders and governors were disappointed that the school was judged to require improvement at its inspection in March, particularly in terms of leadership and management. However, you have accepted this judgement and moved on from it with a shared determination for the school to be judged good or better in the near future.

Your action plan addresses the priorities highlighted at the recent inspection and sets out suitable actions to make improvement. However, it lacks the detail or precision of the existing 'improvement plan', and does not extend far enough to take the school securely to 'good' at its next inspection. The plan includes governors, but without more clearly defined success criteria the governing body will not be able to hold senior leaders to account.

Actions have been put in place to improve the quality of teaching. For example, the federation's two deputy headteachers have both provided coaching for staff, and you told me that you have seen improvements in planning and marking as a result. I was able to see an improvement in the quality of marking in the exercise books that I looked at.

Plans are in place, and progressing well, to increase the number of classes in the school from two to three from September. You have recruited a teacher for the additional class and another to cover an existing teacher's period of planned absence. You recognise the need to maintain and build on the momentum of school improvement as the school enters the new academic year with a new teaching team. High expectations will need to be established quickly and the quality of teaching monitored closely, particularly in terms of its impact on the progress pupils make.

Although disappointed that the leadership and management of the school was not judged to be good at the last inspection, governors have quickly begun to address the issues that arose from it. Governors now join staff when they monitor the quality

of work in pupils' books and, as a result, have better knowledge of the quality of pupils' work. Governors are now using a web-based system for storing and distributing documentation. This means that paperwork is handled more efficiently and governors are better informed. A review of governance has been arranged for next month and governors view this positively, as an opportunity to audit their strengths and areas for development and plan for ongoing improvements.

Provisional achievement data for this year are encouraging. Pupils' attainment is expected to be above the national average at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, at the end of Key Stage 1 and in the Year 1 phonics screening check (an assessment of pupils' knowledge of the link between letters and the sounds they represent). Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is expected to be below the national average but there are clear and valid reasons why this is the case. Cohorts are very small and great caution is needed when considering the various data and what they represent.

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 provides appropriate support to the school. The school's improvement advisor visits regularly and knows the school well. The local authority has arranged for the school to become part of its 'better to best' programme which will provide bespoke training for staff from September onwards.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk County Council.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector