

Serco
Boundary House
2, Wythall Green
Way
Wythall
Birmingham
West Midlands
B47 6LW

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0121 683 2048
victoria.mortimore2@serco.com



8 December 2009

Mr L Hurling
Rothwell Junior School
Gladstone Street
Rothwell
Northamptonshire
NN14 6ER

Dear Mr Hurling

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 December 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, and representatives from the governing body for the time they gave to meet with me.

Since the school was last inspected in December 2008 a newly qualified teacher has been appointed to Year 4. You and your deputy have undertaken regular teaching commitments to strengthen staffing arrangements. A new Chair of Governors was elected in November 2009 and four new governors have been appointed. The school population has remained stable but the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is rising.

As a result of the inspection on 1–2 December 2008, the school was asked to:

- Increase the demands made of the more able so they all reach standards that are high enough
- Make sure that the school's challenging targets are used to confirm all pupils are well on track to reach the best standards possible
- Improve pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the diverse faith and cultures present in Britain today.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Senior leaders have implemented a range of strategies to tackle weaknesses in standards and achievement across the school. Pupils' progress is tracked termly and targeted support for writing, early intervention of underachievement and support for more able pupils are all helping to accelerate progress. Alongside these interventions, the school has introduced a robust assessment system, so teachers can assess pupils' work with much greater accuracy, particularly in writing. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are beginning to rise and pupils' progress is accelerating.

The 2009 Year 6 tests indicate that a greater proportion of pupils achieved the expected levels and attainment is now broadly in line with national averages. In particular, pupils made significant gains in the tests in English and mathematics. For instance, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading improved by 24% and in writing by 28%. Results in mathematics have also improved by 11% with a greater proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels compared to 2008. These improvements have come about because the school has improved the quality of teaching and learning, strengthened subject leadership and has made more effective use of assessment information to meet the needs of the pupils. Standards in science remain below expectations and are similar to 2008 as the school has been focusing on improving English and mathematics. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, although a greater proportion of pupils are beginning to make good gains in their learning due to teachers sharing good practice and enhancing their understanding of how pupils learn. However, the impact of this work has not yet secured all pupils making good or better progress.

Much work has been done to improve the quality and consistency of assessment to ensure that pupils' achieve as well as they can. As a result, senior leaders are now in a position to identify any possible underachievement, at all levels, quickly and provide appropriate support. The school sets challenging targets for improvement based on a faster rate of progress than at the last inspection. Pupils are beginning to make accelerated progress as teachers' expectations in lessons are higher. All pupils keep learning logs where they prepare a piece of work to share what they know about a current topic. These have been particularly successful in raising attainment in writing and providing the school and pupils with information about individual learning styles. The school is beginning to use this information effectively to plan bespoke activities for some pupils, particularly those who are more able.

Assessment for learning strategies have been introduced and staff have received training and support from subject leaders as well as external consultants and the local authority. Consequently, teachers now have a secure understanding of the importance of providing pupils with helpful feedback on their work and planning their next steps in learning. During the inspection, a range of pupils' books sampled indicated that teachers were marking work regularly, making positive comments and checking that learning objectives had been achieved through the use of success criteria.

Members of the school leadership team review and analyse the performance of pupils each term. They use this information to provide targeted support for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored and helpful feedback given to teachers to improve their effectiveness. As a result, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve with a greater proportion of good lessons observed by senior leaders. Lessons sampled during the inspection were judged to be satisfactory overall.

Since the last inspection the school has introduced a structured programme to improve pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the diverse faith and cultures present in Britain. Stronger links are being developed with a school in France and all pupils are taught French as a modern foreign language. Cultural workshop days, for example an insight into Chinese music and dance, are planned regularly to enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' cultural awareness. Colourful displays around the school promote different cultures and the religious education curriculum appropriately explores major world faiths. As a result, pupils are beginning to gain a better understanding of those from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

The satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement coupled with sound systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The local authority has provided helpful support. The work undertaken by the School Improvement Partner and local authority advisers have helped to identify areas of weakness and bring about the support required to improve. The impact of this support has been satisfactory. During the inspection safeguarding procedures were checked and found to meet the latest requirements.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector