

Serco Inspections
Boundary House
2 Wythall Green Way
Middle Lane
BIRMINGHAM
West Midlands
B47 6LW

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0121 683 2033
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



24 February 2010

Mr Elliot Howles
Simon de Senlis Primary School
Hilldrop Road
East Hunsbury
Northampton
NN4 0PH

Dear Mr Howles

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on Tuesday 23 February 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also thank the governors, teachers and pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

Since the last inspection six teachers have left and seven new appointments have been made. The senior leadership team has been completely reorganised and there are new leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

As a result of the inspection on 12–13 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- raise achievement and standards further, particularly in English and mathematics by ensuring that all lessons are consistently challenging
- improve the overall quality of teaching, ensuring that all lessons maintain a brisk pace and that the existing good quality practice is more widespread.

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.

The school's results in Key Stage 2 national tests dipped slightly in 2009, the result of previous underachievement. However, the situation is improving and things are moving forward. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now provided with a good start in all areas of learning so that they are well equipped for when they move into Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been broadly average over the last three years. There are clear indications that pupils' attainment is improving in Key Stage 2, particularly by the end of Year 6 and the pupils in this year group are on track to attain standards that are in line with the national average in both English and mathematics. The introduction of setting across

Years 5 and 6 for mathematics appears to be resulting in improved progress in this subject.

In the seven lessons observed, learning was always at least satisfactory and good in the majority of lessons. A significant improvement in the teachers' lesson planning, highlighting the success criteria for pupils, has resulted in more teaching that is good and improved pupil progress. Most pupils are challenged well and, in the best lessons, teachers ensure the more able move on quickly to more demanding activities and do not unnecessarily listen to teachers' introductions or repeat work. For example, in a good Year 6 mathematics lesson focusing on perimeters and area, a group of more able pupils were given a series of problems to undertake, right at the start of the lesson. The activities really challenged the pupils' understanding and they demonstrated a good capacity to work effectively with their peers and to challenge each other's thinking. There are, however, still some variations between year groups and the school is rightly concentrating its efforts on raising the quality and consistency of teaching further. Teachers have considerably reduced their over-reliance on mundane worksheets although they are not yet all making the best use of technology, for example interactive whiteboards, to make learning more exciting. Pupils are consistently well-behaved and this is partially the result of an improvement in the balance of teacher talk and pupil activity.

The development and strengthening of the senior leadership team by the headteacher is aiding the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and building the school's capacity for sustained improvement. There is a very clear strategic vision and senior leaders know exactly what needs to be done to raise standards and improve pupils' learning. They are skilled in monitoring and are providing clear and effective feedback to teachers on how they might improve their practice. Senior leaders have improved the quality of the school's tracking and assessment procedures, identifying clearly where pupils are in danger of underachieving, and teachers now have this information to help them with their planning. The local authority has provided good support to the school, providing effective guidance to the senior leadership on improving their monitoring procedures and in providing support for the teaching of literacy and numeracy work.

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

Paul Edwards
Additional inspector

Once the school has had 24 hours to report any factual inaccuracies, the post-visit letter is copied as appropriate to the following:

- Appropriate authority - chair of governors/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – except for academies
- For the Secretary of State use the following email address:
CausingConcern.schools@dcf.gov.uk)
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools

A copy with editing marked up should be forwarded to the:

Lead inspector