

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 9159
Direct email: lisa.parkes@serco.com



Sue Spooner
The Lantern Community Primary
Nene Road
Ely
CB6 2WJ

Dear Ms Spooner

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Lantern Community Primary

Following my visit to your school on 21 February 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with staff, the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated. The inspector carried out brief visits to lessons, accompanied by senior staff, where she spoke to teachers and pupils, looked at the displays in the corridors and at the work in pupils' exercise books.

Context

The headteacher retired in December 2012. A new headteacher started in January 2012. One teacher is on maternity leave since the last inspection.

Main findings

The school has made a positive start in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. During her first 30 days, the headteacher has gained a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, which she is sharing

effectively with the governing body and senior leaders. She is taking good account of the views of staff, parents and pupils. She is now in a strong position to challenge staff to make the necessary changes to improve the quality of their teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.

The school improvement plan sets reasonable targets and timescales for improving pupils' progress. However, the action plan does not set out clearly enough what individual staff must change in their day-to-day teaching and the curriculum to ensure that standards improve rapidly and pupils' progress becomes consistently good.

Senior leaders are not proactive enough in checking that all staff adhere to school policies, such as handwriting and spelling, consistently. For example, not all staff correct pupils' grammar and spelling. Consequently, pupils' do not always have high enough expectations of themselves to reach the standards of which they are capable. Senior leaders are keen to improve pupils' progress. They are beginning to make better use of information from assessment and test data to improve the curriculum, particularly to challenge pupils that are more able.

Governors are suitably involved in driving improvement but are not yet confident enough in their level of expertise to challenge the school on its policies and practice. They have agreed the improvement plan and set up a committee to check pupils' progress and ensure that the school meets its targets. The local authority is providing support and training to improve governors' understanding of pupil progress data.

Senior leaders, governors and the local authority have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- simplify the school action plan to identify what staff must focus on weekly in their teaching to improve pupils' progress
- increase consistency in teaching the basic skills, particularly handwriting, making sure that all staff follow the school policy
- increase the frequency and rigour of checks by senior leaders to ensure that agreed actions are carried out consistently by all staff and evaluate the impact of those actions
- review the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to ensure that enough emphasis is given to teaching basic skills and challenging more able pupils
- celebrate and display pupils' best work to ensure that all staff and pupils know what it is possible to achieve

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is receiving an appropriate level of support and monitoring from the local authority. The area senior local authority adviser is identifying training needs well for the governing body. With the headteacher, she is raising governors' expectations systematically through supporting them to set targets for improvement and training them in how to evaluate the impact of senior leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cambridgeshire Local Authority and as below.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones (HMI)

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.
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