

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 6799158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



28 June 2013

Veronica Fenlon
Headteacher
St Mary and St John Junior and Infant School
Beaufort Road
Erdington
Birmingham
B23 7NB

Dear Miss Fenlon

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Mary and St John Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 20 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, and a national leader of education. The school action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including notes of pupil progress meetings, the latest information about pupils' progress, and feedback to teachers following reviews of pupils' work. During this visit, you joined me on brief visits to some classes in Key Stage 2 and one of the deputy headteachers joined me on brief visits to some classes in Key stage 1.

Context

Since the last inspection, one class teacher has left. The governing body has appointed a teacher who will be responsible for leading and managing the Early Years Foundation Stage and a teacher who will be responsible for supporting

teachers in Years 2, 3 and 4. Both teachers will join the school in September 2013. They will also become members of the senior leadership team.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteachers meet regularly to discuss pupils' progress with class teachers. You have identified that this term, pupils in Years 1, 3 and 5 have not made enough progress in reading. Pupils in Year 1 and 3 have not made enough progress in mathematics and pupils in Year 3 have not made enough progress with their writing. In response to this you have worked with class teachers to identify the precise reasons why individual pupils have not made enough progress and the actions that will now be taken. While this is a positive development, it is very recent and the impact of this has yet to be seen.

Although teachers have received appropriate support and training from the local authority and external consultants the quality of teaching is not improving quickly enough. The majority of teachers in the school are not consistently planning work that is well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. This is especially the case in literacy. Lower-ability pupils are often asked to complete the same activity as the more able and they are not always provided with the resources they need to support their learning. In contrast, some improvements are evident in mathematics. Teachers are increasingly providing pupils with the opportunity to use their knowledge of number to solve more difficult problems as seen in pupils' workbooks. Some teachers, such as in Year 6, are making sure that mathematics work sufficiently challenges all pupils.

There are a number of reasons why you and other senior leaders are not making enough of a difference to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in all subjects and classes. The procedures for checking the work of teachers are overly complex and not rigorous enough. There is no shared or systematic approach among all senior leaders to ensure that once weaknesses are identified, urgent and effective action is taken. Similarly, feedback to teachers does not always identify the exact activities teachers need to take to help pupils of different abilities make faster progress.

The governing body continues to ask searching questions about the quality of teaching and rates of pupils' progress. However, governors are not checking carefully enough that your actions and those of other senior leaders are helping pupils of different abilities make better progress in all classes and subjects.

The school improvement plan provides details of the actions that will be taken to improve teaching, and help pupils make better progress. However, it does not identify the precise actions that will be taken to better meet the needs of lower-ability pupils.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- make sure that literacy activities are well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities and that lower-ability pupils are provided with the resources that will support their learning.
- simplify and strengthen the systems for checking the work of staff to ensure all senior leaders work together to take urgent and effective action and identify the exact activities teachers need to take to help pupils of different abilities make faster progress.
- ensure that members of the governing body check thoroughly that the actions of senior leaders are helping different groups of pupils make faster progress in all classes and subjects.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

I would like to meet with the full governing body as soon as possible to discuss the findings from this visit.

External support

You, other senior leaders and teachers have received an appropriate level of support from the local authority, the national leader in education and external consultants. Teachers have also had the opportunity to visit other schools and observe effective practice. This support has not had a sufficient impact in all classes or subjects because the systems for ensuring all staff consistently implement the actions identified during support and training are not sufficiently robust. I recommend that the local authority carries out a full review of pupils' learning, the quality of teaching and leadership and management by the end of October 2013.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham and the Diocese.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector