

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 01216 799164
Direct email: tim.ogbourn@serco.com



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Mr Jason Brewster
Headteacher
Coppice Farm Primary School
Laver Close
Arnold
Nottingham
NG5 7LS

Dear Mr Brewster

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Coppice Farm Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 September 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- provide clear guidance to teachers so that they understand how the quality of their teaching can be improved
- make sure that all staff have the skills needed to teach letters and sounds effectively
- ensure that the school improvement plan focuses more closely on how the school will improve the achievement of pupils supported through the pupil premium, and includes measurable targets for the governing body to check how quickly these pupils close the gap between themselves and other pupils
- ensure that governors are trained to use data about pupils' achievement more effectively, to enable them to challenge school leaders more robustly.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, representatives of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority to discuss actions being taken to improve your school. The school improvement plan was evaluated and a number of other documents were checked, including the outcomes of leaders' monitoring activities and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks. You accompanied me on a tour of the school, which included drop-ins to all classes to observe pupils while they were learning.

Context

Since the last inspection, the Chair of the Governing Body has resigned and a new Chair has been appointed. One teacher is absent from the school on maternity leave. One teacher has been appointed on a temporary contract.

Main findings

There has been a lack of clear, decisive leadership since the last inspection. Little work has been done to develop the quality of the school's senior leaders. Consequently, you are heavily reliant on the external support you receive from the local authority and partner school. You demonstrate little understanding of how this situation can improve.

Very little work has been done to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. You have not observed teachers teaching, or checked their work, often enough to identify what they do well, or set them targets to improve. As a result, your teachers are not clear about how to improve their teaching to enable pupils to make better progress. Although staff have visited your partner school, led by a National Leader of Education (NLE), to observe effective teaching, you are unable to demonstrate the impact of this.

You have devised a school improvement plan, with the support of the local authority and partner school, which addresses all of the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection. However, the plan does not include rigorous measures to enable governors to keep a close check on how well actions are improving the progress of different groups of pupils. Furthermore, you have failed to prioritise some of the key actions in the plan, including work to improve the quality of the teaching of letters and sounds.

The latest unvalidated data about pupils' achievement indicate that pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2013 made better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than those who left the school in the previous year. However leaders' analysis of the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium, lacks depth. As such, it is difficult at this time to gain a comprehensive understanding of pupils' achievement as they move through the school.

The governing body has worked hard, since the last inspection, to develop the knowledge and skills needed to support the school's improved performance, and to gain an improved understanding of the work of the school. For example, governors conducted a review of the school's marking policy, which resulted in some useful amendments being made to it. Governors also attended a meeting with parents and carers alongside the headteacher, which enabled a number of parents and carers to express their opinions and/or concerns about the school. Governors have also attended training to help them improve their effectiveness, which was led by a NLE. Governors understand that they now need to develop their skills in using data about pupils' achievement to help them to challenge leaders more effectively, and increase the impact they make on improving the school's performance.

I was unable to meet with the full governing body during this inspection and will return to do so as soon as possible.

Ofsted will carry out further visits and provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

School leaders receive comprehensive external support, including support from a NLE. Much of the support appears to be relevant and appropriate to the school's needs. However, there is little evidence to suggest that school leaders are making use of this support to improve the quality of leadership and management and the quality of teaching within the school.

The local authority has supported school leaders to implement a comprehensive system to track the progress pupils make as they move through the school. This is a key development and should enable leaders to become better informed about the impact of their work. Despite the support offered to the school since the last inspection, the local authority has not done enough, over time, to improve the quality of leadership and management in the school.

The local authority has agreed to visit the school to conduct detailed observations of the quality of teaching, with senior leaders, and help identify how teachers can improve. The local authority has also agreed to check the accuracy of the school's assessments of pupils' work, and to train governors to improve their understanding of data about pupils' achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Her Majesty's Inspector