

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0121 679 9164  
**Direct email:**  
Tim.Ogbourn@serco.com



25 September 2013

Elizabeth Maycock  
Headteacher  
Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
The Street  
Little Waltham  
Chelmsford  
CM3 3NY

Dear Mrs Maycock

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 September 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 second 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.

Senior leaders and governors are taking incisive and urgent action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the section 5 inspection in November 2012. Following the visit to the school, I recommend that further action is taken to:

- arrange external verification of your judgements on teaching quality by involving a suitably experienced person, such as another headteacher, in lesson observations
- ensure that information on the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is put in context, especially when their starting points are below the level of national curriculum assessments.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and other school leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and diocese. Checks were made on the school's systems for monitoring the performance of pupils and staff. The revised school improvement plan was evaluated, taking into

account amendments made following the previous monitoring visit. We observed two lessons jointly.

## **Context**

Since the previous visit in January 2012, one teacher has retired and a new teacher has been appointed. One teacher is currently on long-term sick leave and her class is being taught by a supply teacher.

## **Main findings**

The school has secure evidence of good progress being made in all year-groups. Most pupils reach the early learning goals in literacy, mathematics and physical development, but their knowledge and understanding of the world is not as well developed. Standards are a little below average, but represent good progress from pupils' starting points. By the end of Key Stage 1, the gap has been closed and standards are average. National curriculum test results from Year 6 and the school's own assessments of pupils in Years 3 to 5 show that progress is good throughout the school, so that standards are above average by the time pupils leave. Last year, every Year 6 pupil made at least the progress expected in reading and writing. Their progress was very strong in mathematics, with four pupils reaching the highest level. The school has taken care to ensure that its assessments are accurate by working with other schools to verify teachers' judgements.

The school has changed the way it organises pupils for phonics lessons (which concern the sounds that letters and letter combinations make). The benefit is evident in the national phonics check of Year 1 pupils, where the proportion reaching the expected standard is now above average.

The school has reorganised the support programmes for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and has provided additional training for teaching and learning support assistants. However, it is too early to judge the full impact of these changes. Good progress is most evident in Key Stage 2. For younger pupils, the school's usual approach to measuring progress, which uses national curriculum levels, tends to undervalue the gains made, because some pupils are well below the lowest national curriculum level when they begin Year 1.

The school's own observations of teaching indicate that most lessons are well taught. This is consistent with the good achievement evident from assessment data. Feedback to teachers is linked to the national Teaching Standards. There has been some external verification of the school's judgements about teaching quality, such as the joint observations we made during this visit, but the judgements would be even more convincing if they were supported, for example, by the headteacher of another school.

Following our joint observations, you identified strengths and weaknesses accurately and gave due consideration to the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. In the two lessons we saw, the teachers ensured that the work they set was closely matched to pupils' different needs and abilities. They also checked carefully on pupils' progress and levels of understanding through careful observation and targeted questioning.

The school has introduced an initiative to encourage pupils to show greater independence and more positive attitudes to learning. The ideas were developed following partnership work within the local cluster of schools. Older pupils in particular are responding well.

The school improvement plan has been revised, making clear who is responsible for each aspect and how the impact of the changes is to be evaluated.

The governing body has been robust in challenging the senior leadership team. Governors recognise that considerable progress has been made, but want more evidence on a few issues, such as the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. The school has agreed to provide further updates on pupils' progress, including that of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In addition, the school will forward copies of the reports it receives as a result of the forthcoming local authority visits. The next inspection is likely to be brought forward.

### **External support**

The school is being supported appropriately by the local authority and diocesan school improvement officers. An advisory teacher has provided training and advice on the teaching of phonics. Very recently, the local authority has set up a link with the headteacher of an outstanding Essex primary school, who will provide advice and guidance to the senior leadership team. The local authority plans to review the school's progress later in the term. It will also conduct a behaviour audit at the request of the governing body. The school continues to draw on the local cluster of schools for new ideas, joint planning, moderation of assessment and opportunities to observe good practice.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Essex and The Diocesan Director of Education for Chelmsford.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**