

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 9161  
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com



3 October 2013

Margaret Prigg  
Interim Headteacher  
Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School  
Calton Avenue  
Hertford  
SG14 2EP

Dear Mrs Prigg

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 October 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 July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that first round of meetings this term to discuss pupils' progress establishes the starting points for all pupils so that their subsequent progress can be measured accurately.
- Finalise and implement the draft policy for individual staff appraisal with clear targets linked to pupils' achievement.
- Include tighter timescales in the school development plan to ensure that improvement is rapid and sustained with set points during the year to check the progress being made.
- Forge links with good and outstanding schools so that staff and governors have access to high quality practice as models to aspire to in their own work.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the lead teachers for English and mathematics, five governors and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated and I checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff. You took me on a tour of the school visiting all classes briefly. In each classroom I looked at a selection of pupils' written work with a particular focus on how well teachers' marking is helping pupils to improve their work.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement, the headteacher retired after long service in the school. You are leading the school as an interim headteacher while the recruitment process to appoint a new headteacher is completed. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2013. The Chair of the Governing Body is newly appointed and other governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.

## **Main findings**

You and the deputy are hitting the ground running. You have quickly established positive relationships with staff who are keen to move the school to good. They are embracing the rapid changes you are making. For example, the new marking policy is in place. Teachers are implementing this consistently and pupils are beginning to respond to the points they are given to improve. Systems for planning the school's future improvement work, assessing pupils' achievement and monitoring the quality of teaching have been updated. The plan to move the school to good is sound. It reflects the key issues arising from the previous inspection and is closely linked to pupils' achievement. Timescales indicated on the plan are not tight enough to ensure that the school moves forward at a pace. Milestones have not been set along the way when you and governors check that everything is on track to achieve the goals. You have already undertaken the first round of observations of teaching and have given staff clear guidance on how to improve their performance. It will be important to make return visits or drop-ins to check that your advice has been acted upon.

The deputy has undertaken useful work in drawing together an overview of the extra help accessed by those pupils who are most at risk of underachievement. Teachers can see at a glance who these pupils are and how much extra support they are given. They are better informed to check that the provision is making a difference to these vulnerable pupils' learning. The leaders of English and mathematics have a firm grasp of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. For example, recognising that pupils' poor knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) was leading to their underachievement in reading and writing, the

teaching of phonics is now regular across the school. Leaders are acutely aware that staff have not been networking well enough with other schools or receiving sufficient training to update them and improve their teaching. The governing body has changed its committee structure to ensure that the workload is spread and duplication avoided. Governors have agreed a policy for making focused visits to the school and several have been in already this term. They are keen to build on this so that they are better informed of the school's work and are in a stronger position therefore to support and challenge school leaders.

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

### **External support**

Senior leaders are working closely with the local authority that recognises the school's particular circumstances and is providing support tailored to the school's needs. Consultants are working with staff to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, support for individual pupils' behaviour and developing aspects of literacy and numeracy. Support and advice for the governing body is forthcoming while the process of recruiting a new headteacher is completed. The local authority brokered the arrangements for interim leadership ensuring that the school has not stalled in beginning its improvement work. A full review of the school's performance is planned at mid-point during this school year.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**