

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 9158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com



18 December 2013

Nigel Turner
Headteacher
William Rhodes Primary School
Hunloke Avenue
Boythorpe
S40 2NR

Dear Mr Turner

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to William Rhodes Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 17 December 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 October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- formally and rigorously review the practice of all teaching staff and analyse the impact this has on the progress pupils make
- ensure the excellent marking seen in some classes is consistent across all year groups
- confirm a date in the very near future for an external review of governance, and arrange relevant training for governors
- amend the school action plan, so that it is reduced in size, lists individual members of staff responsible for evaluating actions, and states milestones for success more clearly.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, your assistant headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. You took me on a tour of classrooms where we saw the learning taking place in every year group.

Context

There have been no staff changes since your recent inspection.

Main findings

The achievement of your pupils declined in 2013 when compared to 2012. This means you have greater challenges in this regard than those identified by your recent inspection.

After your inspection, you conducted a learning walk and identified areas for improvement for some teachers. However, the quality assurance of teachers' practice needs to be undertaken more rigorously and include the scrutiny of pupils' work and the progress they make. You have plans to create a system of performance management which addresses these points.

I saw some excellent marking which allowed pupils to understand where they had gone wrong and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not consistent across the school. You are aware of this and have a training day on best practice in marking arranged for your teachers.

You have completely overhauled the teaching of mathematics and all teachers now use the same strategies. This has improved the consistency of teaching in this subject. Pupil engagement is good; this includes the engagement of some boys who were formerly disaffected. It is too early to judge the impact of these changes on pupil progress. Your assistant headteacher with responsibility for mathematics plans to undertake training in conducting lesson observations, which will help share best practice amongst all teachers.

Pupil progress meetings are now more rigorous. Teachers understand that they must be able to account for the progress of all individual pupils and offer strategies for improvement where necessary. This closer focus on pupils' achievement means that teachers can plan their lessons and meet the needs of individual pupils more effectively, though it is too early to judge the impact of this.

A higher than average proportion of pupils joins your school midway through their education. Rather than relying on pupils' records being sent from former schools, you now ensure that the ability of any pupil who is new to the school is assessed

quickly. This gives teachers a better chance of meeting new pupils' needs more effectively.

You and your senior leaders reviewed the practice and impact of your teaching assistants. They are now more aware of the specific roles they have, and the part they play in helping pupils make progress.

The Chair of the Governing Body is keen to improve her practice and hold school leaders to account more rigorously. Capacity is an issue and advertisements have been placed in the local press to try and strengthen the Governing Body. The local authority has appointed two new governors. The Chair of the Governing Body attended an Ofsted seminar on 'Getting to Good'. However, while those governors who attend meetings regularly are willing and committed, they are no more capable of holding the school to account now than they were at the time of the last inspection; no additional training has taken place or been planned and, most importantly, an external review of governance has not yet been arranged.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. I intend to return to visit you next term.

External support

The local authority representative knows the school well and he understands the specific areas for improvement that you need to focus on. The local authority played a significant role in the creation of the school's post-inspection improvement plan and helped address one of the areas for improvement through providing support via a consultant. The local authority representative has also helped to broker visits to good schools to share best practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian McNeilly
Her Majesty's Inspector