

Serco Inspections
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 9146
Direct email: clare.benson@serco.com

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Christine Hall
Headteacher
Broadfield Primary School
Windmill Road
Hemel Hempstead
HP2 4BX

Dear Mrs Hall

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Broadfield Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in September 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, and six members of the governing body including the Chair and the Vice-Chair. I conducted a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. I visited every class briefly accompanied by you and the deputy headteacher. I evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan.

Context

Since the previous inspection, five teachers have left the school. Some subject leaders are new to their post. You have appointed a new special educational needs coordinator.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Leaders, managers and governors have responded swiftly to the outcome of the previous inspection. You and the new deputy headteacher have previous experience of raising standards in underperforming schools. You have set yourselves challenging targets in your school improvement plan and have monitored, evaluated and reviewed progress against each of your proposed actions.

You are taking appropriate action to tackle the legacy of underachievement, and your current information on pupils' progress indicates a more positive picture across all areas, apart from mathematics in Year 3. However, pupils' starting points are low and you acknowledge the need to improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and to ensure that your new subject leaders develop their leadership skills to drive improvement in their specific areas of responsibility. The gap in attainment for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and others in the school remains one of your key challenges.

My scrutiny of pupils' books shows that teachers are implementing the revised marking policy well, and I saw many good examples of helpful marking which tells pupils what they have done well and how they can improve. Some teachers provide more regular opportunities for pupils to respond to their marking than others.

The local authority has conducted an external review of governance which confirms the findings of the previous inspection. Governors acknowledge they did not provide a suitable level of challenge and support in the past. However, a suitable action plan is now in place which identifies training needs and desired outcomes within a short timeframe. All members of the governing body now have a job description, and their visits to the school have a more specific focus, and aim to gather enough evidence to support what they are being told by the school's leaders and managers.

The local authority has produced a detailed statement of action and has identified key points during the year when progress can be measured. The Hertfordshire Improvement Partner meets regularly with school leaders, including with the Chair of the Governing Body, in order to hold them to account for school improvement. You have also drawn on the support of the local authority by commissioning the services of a behaviour adviser, and an adviser for Early Years provision. In addition, you have sought the support of two external consultants to develop the delivery of personal, health and social education and to develop leadership skills across the school.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector