

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



30 June 2014

Mrs Anne-Marie McElhinney  
Headteacher  
St Thomas More RC Primary School  
Park Lane  
Eastfield  
Peterborough  
PE1 5JW

Dear Mrs McElhinney

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Thomas More RC Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 January 2014. 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:

- urgently review the accuracy of the assessment information that the school currently gathers
- raise the quality of teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 so that pupils make better progress across Key Stage 2.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and four members of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I also evaluated the school action plan and the school's assessment documentation. You accompanied me during visits to several classes in the school where we observed teaching and looked at pupils' work.

## **Context**

One teacher has left the school since the recent inspection. The school has re-organised teaching in response and has appointed a permanent replacement for September 2014.

## **Main findings**

School assessment data currently indicates that attainment is well below national expectations in all year groups in Key Stage 2 and that pupils are making slow progress in some year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. This assessment data is, however, unreliable because too much of it is inaccurate and teachers are sometimes making errors when they record the assessment information. The way that data is presented does not provide you and other leaders with a sufficiently clear picture of overall achievement. Similarly, governors do not have a clear enough understanding of achievement and have an overly positive view of the school's performance.

Teaching in Year 6 is better than in other year groups in Key Stage 2. Despite making good progress in this year, the legacy of previous underachievement means that standards remain below average for reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low in Years 3, 4 and 5 and as a result progress is too slow. In contrast, teaching is improving in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 where teachers and teaching assistants are promoting learning well. Progress is accelerating and standards in Key Stage 1 are improving: attainment in writing and mathematics is now broadly in line with national averages for pupils in Year 2. Standards in reading are below average in Year 2 but have improved significantly in Year 1 because of very structured and systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).

Your work to improve marking is having a positive impact. In some year groups pupils receive very useful guidance which points them towards their next steps and requires them to respond. In other year groups, marking is less helpful; teachers are ignoring basic errors such as the incorrect use of capital letters in the middle of a sentence. As a result, pupils continue to make fundamental errors in their writing.

Your improvement plan is too long and is not precise enough to target the main issues. Governors are visiting the school more frequently and are becoming more familiar with its work. This includes looking at pupils' work and spending time in lessons with 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**

The local authority is providing an appropriate level of support. You are accessing the support of consultants and advisors to improve teaching in specific areas. You are also receiving support with your improvement plan and with moderating pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Moodie

**Her Majesty's Inspector**