

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: 01216 799169
Direct email:
mathew.mitchell@serco.com



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Ms Mandy Fieldsend
Orchard Church of England Primary School, Broughton Astley
Blenheim Crescent
Broughton Astley
Leicester
LE9 6QX

Dear Ms Fieldsend

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Orchard Church of England Primary School, Broughton Astley

Following my visit to your school on 12 September 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 June and 2014. 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 the school action plan is monitored effectively by identifying roles and responsibilities clearly
- develop the skills and strategies used by governors to gather first-hand information about how well the school is doing
- introduce frequent opportunities for teachers to update information about pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, so that pupils' underachievement and any teacher development issues can be addressed swiftly.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, the subject lead for mathematics, three members of the governing body including the Chair and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since

the last inspection. I evaluated the school's action plan and checked pupils' assessment information. I scrutinised governors' records of visits and other external evaluations of the school. I visited all classes with you during which I spoke informally with pupils and looked at some workbooks. I also checked the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Context

Since the last inspection two new members of staff have been appointed to teach in Year 3 and 5, one of whom is a senior leader and one a newly qualified teacher. Two members of staff left at the end of the summer term. One temporary newly qualified teacher has been recruited to teach in Year 4.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteacher have taken swift action to address the areas for improvement since the last inspection. The action plan is sharply focused on improving teaching practice. Among other areas, it specifically addresses the current weaknesses in mathematics teaching and raising achievement of the most able. The milestones and success criteria are clear and appropriate. However, the plans do not specifically identify roles and responsibilities for monitoring the actions taken; this means that initiatives may not be implemented effectively.

Staff have undergone a number of training sessions since the section 5 inspection to address key areas such as consistency in marking, feedback and presentation. An examination of some pupils' workbooks during the visit showed an improved application of the policy across the school since the last inspection. For example, pupils' presentation, especially in mathematics, was markedly improved. Subject leaders are improving their leadership skills; they have received bespoke training from a commissioned school improvement advisor to develop their book monitoring and lesson observation skills. While quality assurance activities are carried out regularly, pupils' progress data is not updated frequently enough. This means that in mathematics, for example, pupils' underachievement is not always picked up early enough and possible training issues not addressed when it should.

Governors have improved their skills and knowledge about school improvement. They have drawn upon the expertise from the network of governing bodies within the local family of schools. Governors carry out regular focused visits to the school and challenging questions are asked of leaders. However, the way that they gather first-hand information about how well the school is doing is still under-developed. In addition, their role in the school action plan is not specific enough which means that they may not be able to hold leaders to account as effectively as they could.

External support

You have been very proactive in seeking out appropriate partnerships to support the school's improvement plan. The formal links with a local teaching alliance school has enabled subject leaders to learn from best practice. In addition, you have commissioned an experienced school improvement advisor, who has worked closely with subject leaders to improve their role. The local authority provision of support is strengthening for the school and quality assurance activities undertaken by them have been effective. An outstanding school leader has been allocated by them to support you to improve the school further.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire and The Diocese of Leicester.

Yours sincerely

Zarina Connolly
Her Majesty's Inspector