

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 9169  
**Direct email:** mathew.mitchell@serco.com



13 November 2014

Kim Thackray  
Interim Headteacher  
Heybridge Primary School  
Rowan Drive  
Heybridge  
CM9 4TU

Dear Mrs Thackray

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Heybridge Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 12 November 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 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, governors and the sponsor are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the sponsor, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We observed learning in all of the classes who were in school, I looked at a range of pupils' work and evaluated the school action plan.

### **Context**

Since the school was last inspected you have been appointed as interim headteacher, the headteacher has left and an interim headteacher appointed. You expect to remain in post until a substantive headteacher is appointed. A new Chair of the Local Governing Body started in September.

## **Main findings**

The senior leadership team and governing body have taken rapid action to begin to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. You have acted as a catalyst for improvement and have enabled key subject leaders to do their jobs properly. You are starting to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. While these are still early days the school has clearly started its journey towards becoming at least good.

The school has produced a thorough and detailed improvement plan. This is well focused on the areas for improvement identified in the most recent inspection report. Dates for completion are clear. The plan sets ambitious targets for pupils' progress but these are not reflected in targets for attainment. The school will revise the end of year targets for pupils' attainment following the next full assessment of their work. The revised targets will reflect the increasing amounts of progress pupils are expected to make.

The relatively new governing body is enthusiastic and increasingly well informed. They have greater faith in the accuracy and consistency of the information they are receiving from the headteacher and are better informed about how well the school is doing. They have taken prompt action to respond to the areas for improvement identified in the July 2014 external review of governance.

In the 2014 national phonics screening check, the performance of pupils in Year 1 was below that of other pupils nationally. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals did about half as well as their classmates. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average. Pupils did best in mathematics and least well in writing. Boys did much less well than girls, and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals did much less well than their classmates. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was broadly average in reading but below average in mathematics, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, significantly so in mathematics and writing. Boys do less well than girls in writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling and much less well in writing. They do better than girls in mathematics. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals did less well than their classmates and less well than similar pupils nationally in everything except reading. Fewer pupils made the expected or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than in most schools. The progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is poor.

The most recent school assessments indicate that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate and attainment is starting to rise. This matches well with evidence in pupils' books, which shows that in most classes pupils are trying harder and producing better work. The quality of writing is improving, with pupils using a wider vocabulary and better punctuation. The lack of a current handwriting policy shows. Pupils do not form letters consistently well and few are using a joined cursive script. The school recognises this as an area for improvement. Some adults do not model good grammar or correct spelling when sharing writing with pupils. Pupils now have

more opportunities to practise their mental arithmetic skills in investigative work. There is also a greater focus on pupils knowing the multiplication tables and number bonds in order to improve the speed at which they solve problems.

The quality of teaching is improving. In most classes work is better matched to pupils' abilities. This is in part because teachers' assessments of how well pupils are doing are more accurate, but also because expectations have risen. Teachers usually take care to explain what it is they want pupils to learn but sometimes the explanation is not clear enough. In one class, pupils were asked to work with prepositions, nouns and pronouns but quite a few could not explain what any of them were. In almost all classes the quality of marking has improved significantly. It tells pupils what they are doing well and how to improve their work. Pupils say they particularly value the immediacy of feedback, and that they are able to respond the very next day. They say this is really helpful. Scrutiny of pupils' books supports this endorsement. Marking is clearly helping pupils to improve their work. Senior leaders are taking action to ensure that the quality of marking is good enough in all classes. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors are bright, lively and attractive. Those which act as additional resources for pupils, the 'splodge walls' are effective in encouraging pupils to use exciting vocabulary and improve their writing.

Because the quality of teaching is improving and learning is more exciting, pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to learning. In all classes visited, pupils worked with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Relationships are strong and pupils are eager to learn. They are friendly, polite and welcoming and are ready to benefit from the fruits which good teaching will bring.

### **External support**

The school has been well supported by a range of partners. It has continued a positive relationship with Essex Local Authority, which has provided effective support for subject leadership and to improve the quality of teaching. The academy sponsors have also provided very effective support through an Essex school which already has strong leadership. There has been good support for the interim headteacher and for key subject leaders and learning support assistants. The school has also re-engaged with the Blackwater Consortium of local schools in order to moderate its assessments of pupils' work and progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Essex and the DfE - Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**