

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 9161
Direct email: ann.morris@serco.com

2 December 2014

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 1 December 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 second 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- raise standards in the presentation of pupils' work in Year 3 and Year 4.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also evaluated the school's assessment documentation and improvement plan. You accompanied me during visits to all classes in the school, where we observed learning and looked at pupils' work. We

also looked at a range of pupils' writing to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments.

Context

One teacher has left the school since the previous monitoring visit. Another has taken a secondment opportunity and is working at another school. Three newly qualified teachers started working at the school in September 2014.

Main findings

Your strategies to improve the quality of teaching have been successful. Pupils are now making much better progress because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve have risen. Lessons are more clearly planned and are providing pupils with significantly more challenge. Pupils are responding positively to the changes and most have made more than expected progress during the autumn term. This means that, for the first time in recent years, standards are in line with age-related expectations for all year groups in mathematics. This is also the case for most year groups in reading. Writing is improving at the same rate as reading and mathematics but the starting points were very low for a large proportion of pupils and this means that writing is below age-related expectations in Years 4, 5 and 6. This represents a significant improvement since the previous monitoring visit when standards were low in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

The quality of presentation across Key Stage 2 is too variable. Pupils' handwriting in Years 5 and 6 is frequently good, and the pride that many pupils have for their work is apparent. In Years 3 and 4 this is not always the case and some teachers are accepting work that is untidy or poorly presented. It is clear that many pupils have made progress with their handwriting but there is more to be done.

Teachers' assessment has improved. It is much more accurate than in the past and is being used to plan lessons and set targets that more precisely match the needs of the pupils. You have made good use of training and staff meeting time to ensure that all teachers have a much stronger understanding of how to assess pupils' work and their progress. I looked at a sample of pupils' writing that teachers had assessed to be all at the same level; teacher's assessments were accurate.

At over 90% in Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is increasing significantly. You have provided more support for this group of pupils, which includes many who speak little English when they join the school. This support is promoting better achievement. For example, the systematic, highly structured teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) enabled an above average proportion of pupils to meet the standards of the phonics screening check in Year 1 last year.

You have made changes to the leadership structure. You are holding your leaders to account more effectively for pupils' achievement in the year groups that they lead.

These leaders are making 'impact report presentations' to governors to explain the progress pupils are making and how it is being monitored. Governors are asking the right questions and are better informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They are more actively involved in evaluating the impact of improvement strategies and are working in pairs to monitor the progress that the school is making. You are providing governors with useful information about the school's performance, drawn from your own monitoring activities. You have made good use of external support and have visited an outstanding school to learn from their good practice.

External support

The local authority is providing good support for the school. This has contributed positively to the school's recent improvement. Advisers for English and mathematics have made five visits to the school this year to support the improvements in teaching. A senior adviser is supporting the development of leadership across the school and has visited the school on eight occasions this term.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Moodie
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Local authority
- Diocese