

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 9158
Direct email: rachel.dayan@serco.com

17 January 2013

Rae Aldous
Headteacher
Whitton Green Community Primary School
Westwood Avenue
Lowestoft
NR33 9RR

Dear Ms Aldous

Special measures monitoring inspection of Whitton Green Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2012.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement and action plans were evaluated. HMI visited lessons in Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to evaluate learning and assessment.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing. The headteacher has taken up her post very recently. Three teaching staff have recently left, including the deputy headteacher. The school currently has no substantive

deputy headteacher or leader for Key Stage 2, with both posts currently advertised. The headteacher is currently supported by two seconded leaders; one from a local school and another from the local authority. The school does not currently have capacity to mentor further newly qualified teachers.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Despite current staffing shortfalls, leadership and management at the school have improved. The new headteacher is realistic about the issues facing the school. In the short time she has been in post, she has accurately gauged their significance and extent. Rightly, she has concentrated on managing extreme and disruptive behaviour. New behaviour policies have been devised and implemented rigorously. Staff now have clear guidelines about what to do if behaviour is a problem, and all have received appropriate training. A system of sanctions and rewards is now in place and is well understood by pupils. As a result, behaviour has improved significantly and this is allowing many more pupils to learn. HMI did not see any of the extreme behaviour noted in the previous inspection. Behaviour was good in some classes where pupils were stimulated to learn independently. Many pupils have yet to develop these skills, however.

The current post-inspection action plan is fit for purpose. It accurately identifies areas where improvements are needed and gives clear indications how improvements will be made, by when, and who will be responsible. It will, however, need to be updated soon because the school has made rapid progress in tackling the key issue of behaviour. In addition, the assessment of pupils' progress and achievement has not been sufficiently reliable to give an accurate indication of precisely what targets are appropriate in which years and groups. Teachers assess pupils' progress but this has only very recently become systematic enough to gain an accurate picture of individual and group performance.

In class, teachers have begun to use assessment data to plan how they teach. However, not all teachers ensure that lessons are pitched at the right level to stimulate the learning of all. In some examples, pupils are bored because what they are learning is too easy. The school action plan rightly recognises this as an urgent issue, together with the sharing of the good practice that does exist in the use of assessment to plan learning.

Performance management has improved significantly. The school's lesson observation system is reliable, accurately identifying the best and weakest teaching. However, opportunities to monitor the accuracy of teachers' assessment of learning during the observation process are not exploited. Lesson observations are used effectively to aid performance management of staff. Roles have been clearly defined,

and areas of accountability made clear. Teachers have been made accountable for reaching targets for the attainment and progress of their class. However, the systematic monitoring of progress towards these targets has not yet been fully implemented.

Governors recognise that they have not always been sufficiently well informed about school performance data. They have been too reliant on analysis and data given to them by the headteacher. As a consequence, they have not been able to identify and challenge poor performance effectively. Recent governing body meeting minutes indicate that the extent of governors' challenge has improved. Much of the governors' work, especially in the monitoring of the school's action plan, has been undertaken by the Chair and a small number of governors. The complexities of this plan mean that all governors could usefully become closely involved in this important work.

The local authority's plan of action is detailed and appropriate. It has ensured that the school has been provided with extensive support in critical areas of leadership, assessment, literacy and numeracy, and support for the special needs coordinator. In addition, extensive support and training has been given to tackle issues around poor or extreme behaviour.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector