

Serco Inspections
Cedar House
21 William Street
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1LH

Ofsted
T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Serco
Direct T 0121 683 3888



20 May 2011

Mr Rushton
The Spalding Parish Church of England Day School
Clay Lake
Spalding
PE11 2QG

Dear Mr Rushton

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Spalding Parish Church of England Day School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to the members of staff and the pupils who spoke with me.

Since the last inspection there have been significant staffing changes. An assistant headteacher, responsible for leading the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, is now teaching in one of the Foundation Stage classes to provide additional support for staff. A new teacher has joined this team. There are new teachers in Years 2 and 5. A temporary teacher has covered for a maternity leave which is soon to end in Year 1 as a second maternity leave will begin. The governing body has appointed a new Vice Chair. Leadership and management have been restructured and the special educational needs coordinator has joined the senior leadership team.

As a result of the inspection on 27 January 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection, there are signs of improvement in pupils' achievement. The rising trend in attainment at the end of Year 6 in English has been sustained and an apparent declining trend in attainment in mathematics has been halted. Evidence confirms that the current Year 6 are on track to reach at least average levels of attainment in mathematics and above average levels of attainment in English by the time that they leave the school. More pupils are achieving the higher grades of which they are capable. This represents good and accelerated progress for this

September 2010



group to ensure they have caught up after the underachievement they experienced earlier in school. Similarly, current pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 show an encouraging trend towards above average attainment. In Years 1 and 2, there is a mixed picture, though evidence also confirms that pupils here are on track for at least broadly average levels of attainment.

Pupils get off to a sound start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter with broadly average levels of knowledge and skills. They make good progress in some areas, for example in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal, social and emotional development. In other areas, their progress is satisfactory, and most are on track to start Year 1 with levels of knowledge and skills in line with those expected for their age.

The progress pupils make is mostly satisfactory; for an increasing number, it is good. In classes where the teaching is consistently strong and additional interventions are well focused, school data confirms that progress has been accelerating term on term. This is not the case in all classes. School data analysis and other monitoring confirm a complex picture of variation between year groups and classes. It identifies times when progress slows too much, leading to a reliance on the need for accelerated progress later to ensure pupils catch up.

Attendance fluctuates around average. There is a core of pupils who are persistently absent but the school works with other agencies to do all it can to persuade parents and carers of the importance of regular attendance. During the visit, no instances were seen of poor behaviour, although behaviour remains a focus for leaders and managers because, as one pupil said, 'Behaviour has improved but there are still some children who don't listen and do the right thing.'

A key to success has been the significant improvement to leadership's capacity to drive improvement. The headteacher, supported by two assistant headteachers, has astutely reorganised the structure and improved communication and accountability whilst maintaining high morale. There is now a systematic and rigorous cycle of monitoring and review in which all middle leaders play their part, working in teams with more experienced colleagues to ensure appropriate training and support. A key improvement has been the accuracy brought to assessment and the rigour with which the information collected about how well pupils are doing is used to plan for their next steps of learning, to target valuable resources and to monitor success. Teachers now have ownership of this data and are held accountable for using it successfully. As a result, the proportion of good teaching has increased. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen. Planning takes account of differing needs. However, not all teachers are equally skilled in delivering lessons in which learning proceeds at a good pace for all groups in their class because they do not check often enough, for example, if the work is too easy or too hard.

Pupils now know their targets and are given helpful 'next steps' so that they know how to improve. Some pupils say that they are not always given enough time to carry these out before moving on to the next piece of work. Some excellent examples of developmental marking and pupils assessing their own success were seen, for example, in Year 6. These practices are not applied consistently across school.

Pupils report that they are pleased with how their work has become more exciting because of the introduction of more interesting topic themes and more first-hand and other enrichment experiences. Pupils particularly value the high quality opportunities they are offered to develop their skills using digital media. They also value being able to have their say in what they choose to study. There are some examples of the curriculum being made more relevant and suitably challenging for particular groups. For example, more-able pupils research, interview, write and produce a school newspaper. Those who are confident in English and other languages have their talents valued and used to support their peers. However, there is often a focus on the provision of additional or separate support for particular groups and individuals rather than reflecting fully on how the curriculum might be modified in classrooms. There are still not enough examples of high quality written work in subjects other than English.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, considerable improvements have been made to resources, planning, and assessment and to outdoor provision. These are helping to ensure children have more opportunities to be creative, to explore and to solve problems for themselves. Not all staff are equally skilled in making interventions to maximise these learning opportunities and the outdoor environment lacks enough opportunities for children to experience the natural rather than the made environment.

School leaders value the support they have received from the local authority, particularly the challenge and support they have received from their School Improvement Partner, Early Years Foundation Stage and digital media consultants.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010

- By September 2010 to improve the consistency and frequency of good teaching and learning to raise achievement ensuring that:
 - in lessons, starting points for learning reflect pupils' capabilities
 - expectations are high for pupils to produce good quality written work in all subjects
 - all pupils are involved in evaluating their work, especially in English
 - all staff benefit from observing high quality teaching modelled by senior leaders and other expert professionals.

- Ensure that all pupils benefit from an imaginative curriculum that supports their needs and promotes good learning by:
 - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with more opportunities to engage in tempting activities that promote experimentation and creativity in all areas of learning both indoors and outside
 - enabling all pupils to apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in other subjects
 - adapting units of study in response to the changing needs, interests and aspirations of individuals and groups.

- Strengthen the leadership skills of middle managers by:
 - focusing subject leaders' attention on how well pupils are learning subject-related skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to national targets for attainment
 - developing a systematic cycle of rigorous monitoring and review undertaken by all middle managers that focuses on how well pupils are learning
 - providing targeted professional development and coaching from accomplished subject leaders.