

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancashire Investment Centre
Maple View
White Moss Business Park
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

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

Direct T 01695 566934
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: gtunnicliffe@cfbt.com



7 October 2010

Mrs Mandy Pickles
Headteacher
Ackton Pastures Primary School
College Grove
Whitwood
Castleford
West Yorkshire
WF10 5NS

Dear Mrs Pickles

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Ackton Pastures Primary School

Following my visit with Andrew Clarke, Additional Inspector, to your school on 5 - 6 October 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection are set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – **good**

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – **good**

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2009.

- Ensure that the governing body fulfils its statutory duties in ensuring that all safeguarding requirements are met.
- Increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards in English, mathematics and science in both key stages, by:
 - strengthening the quality and consistency of all teaching to ensure pace, rigour and challenge for pupils in all lessons
 - developing assessment procedures and practice through better use of information about pupils' performance to drive and secure improvement
 - ensuring pupils always know what they must do to improve.
- Improve assessment procedures and practices, by:
 - using information about pupils' performance to drive and secure improvement
 - ensuring pupils always know what they must do to improve.
- Develop leadership, management and governance, by:
 - ensuring that monitoring by subject leaders is rigorous, regular and focuses sharply on pupils' learning, and that findings are translated into actions to bring about rapid improvement
 - establishing rigorous evaluation procedures in all areas of the school's work to help leaders develop a clear view of where improvements are most needed so that these can be rigorously pursued
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the school to account through challenge, support and setting a clear direction for its work.

Special measures: monitoring of Ackton Pastures Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 5-6 October 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the School Improvement Partner.

Context

The substantive headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has been absent since November 2009 due to ill health. An acting headteacher commenced at the beginning of the spring term 2010 and will continue in post until July 2011. A new deputy headteacher took up her post at the beginning of the autumn term 2010.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The gap in attainment between that achieved in Ackton Pastures and by most other schools is closing. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making better progress now than they were at the time of the previous inspection. An analysis of data regarding Year 2 assessments for 2010 shows that attainment in respect of reading, writing and mathematics has risen noticeably this year and is close to the local authority average. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels for their ages remains low. An analysis of unvalidated data in relation to the outcomes of national tests at the end of Year 6 for 2010 demonstrates that attainment is rising. Performance in mathematics exceeded the national average for the first time for many years, with many pupils attaining the higher levels for their age. Attainment in English, although below that expected for their age, is higher than it has been for the past four years. This also applies to the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels. However, standards in writing are too low across the school.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards in English, mathematics and science in both key stages – **good**

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about their learning. Behaviour is good during lessons and as pupils move around the school. Pupils are courteous and respectful towards their teachers, other adults and visitors. Pupils listen to their teachers and apply themselves well to the tasks they are set. It is these positive working habits that are contributing to improved progress. Attendance is improving,

although it remains below the target set. However, the school is not complacent and plans are in place to tackle persistent absentees.

The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There is a direct link between improved teaching and learning and pupils' progress. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher. Classroom organisation and the management of pupils and their learning are significantly improved. As a result, pupils are more focused on their work and clearly enjoy their learning. A new marking policy is in place and is adhered to by all staff. Pupils now receive better feedback on their work including guidance as to how they can improve. More rigorous systems are in place to assess and track pupils' progress over time. They are used very effectively by senior leaders and subject leaders to identify weaknesses in the curriculum as well as those pupils who are underachieving. This allows for targeted pupils to benefit from a range of intervention strategies delivered by suitably trained teaching assistants. This extra support is paying dividends, particularly in developing pupils' phonic knowledge.

The use of assessment during lessons is improving and some strong practice is evident. However, not all teachers are sufficiently skilled in making observations that are focused on pupils' learning and, as a result, some pupils' learning needs are not always well catered for. Nonetheless, overall, the use of assessment has improved a great deal since the school was judged to require special measures.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress and raise the standards in English, mathematics and science in both key stages, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching
 - developing assessment procedures – **good**

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher continues to provide the school with a much improved quality of leadership. She is ably supported by a recently appointed deputy headteacher. As a senior leadership team they are continuing to develop a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan targets the key areas for development well. Staff are very supportive and fully endorse the drive to secure improvement. A strong sense of teamwork is emerging and this is influencing the pace at which improvement is being realised. Leaders at all levels are making a valued contribution to the work of the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the strong features identified in the previous inspection, particularly in respect of outcomes leadership and management continue. Subject leaders have made considerable progress in fulfilling their role. They have received good training and above all have been empowered and trusted to become fully

involved in taking the school forward. They are now analysing pupils' progress data, scrutinising work and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum. This has enabled them to have a good understanding of how initiatives designed to bring about improvement are having an impact on pupils' progress. The IEB provides strong support and challenge in equal measure. Its members are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school and have established good working relationships with all involved. The Chair of the IEB is actively seeking to secure the long-term leadership of the school, a situation that needs to be resolved as soon as possible. Improvements in respect of safeguarding have been made. The single central record is complete, up to date and meets current government requirements. Policies are continually being revised and adjustments made where necessary.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met – **good**
- Improve the schools' self-evaluation procedures in all areas of its work to help identify where improvements are required – **good**
- Ensure that monitoring by subject leaders is rigorous and focuses on pupils' learning and that findings lead to actions designed to secure improvement – **good**
- Ensure that the governing body holds the school to account through challenge and support and sets clear direction for its work – **good**

External support

The quality of support provided by the local authority and the School Improvement Partner is good. They have an accurate picture of the work of the school and provide effective guidance to the headteacher.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise standards in writing across the school.