

CfBT Inspection Services T 0300 1231231
Suite 22 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
West Lancs Investment Centre www.ofsted.gov.uk
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Direct T 01695 566934
Direct F 01695 729320
gtunncliffe@cfbt.com
www.cfbt-inspections.com



4 March 2011

Mrs A Willmot
Headteacher
Consett Junior School
Beechdale Road
Consett
County Durham
DH8 6AY

Dear Mrs Willmot,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Consett Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to those members of the governing body and the pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

Since the previous inspection the school has made changes to the accommodation by creating separate classrooms from the open plan organisation. One teacher has been appointed. The two classes in each year group are now organised by ability, the class with lower attaining pupils has fewer pupils and the support of a permanent teaching assistant.

As a result of the inspection on 9 and 10 December 2009, 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 satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The previous inspection judged progress and standards to be increasing through the school from significantly below average in 2008 and 2009. This was borne out by the 2010 Year 6 national test data where progress and standards were shown to be broadly average. Improvement was especially good in mathematics, where standards had been particularly low. This is due to the work in developing the curriculum in mathematical calculations throughout the school and in supporting teachers' professional development in teaching this aspect more effectively in lessons. This inspection confirms that this aspect of the school's provision has improved, with pupils making better progress in these sessions. Science standards have risen from significantly below average in 2009. The proportion of pupils now reaching the expected level is average, although the proportion reaching the higher levels remains too low.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which is evident both during lessons and when they talk about their school. When given the chance, they work well together to complete tasks in groups or to discuss their thinking with each other. This is not consistent across all classes as teachers miss some opportunities for pupils to take advantage of this type of learning. In the best lessons pupils concentrate well, produce a good volume of work and explain their thinking clearly to the rest of the class. In the weakest lessons, progress is slower because activities lack stimulation and are not directly relevant to pupils' interests.

There has been an increase in the proportion of good teaching but there are instances of weaker teaching through the school. Teachers now use their time better in lessons. There is a good variety of work in lessons and the majority of staff set a good pace to learning. Where this is particularly good, teachers set strict time limits for activities and create a sense of urgency. Improvement in ensuring that activities match different pupils' needs is mixed. Most staff make sure that they target different pupils effectively in whole-class sessions. The key inconsistency across classes is in the group tasks. In many classes there is not enough challenge for more able pupils and in some group work all pupils carry out the same task, consequently their different needs are not fully met. Some pupils said that their work was too easy. In teachers' planning there is not enough detail of the learning expected for each of the groups. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently well and this ensures that they make similar progress to other pupils.

The school is working effectively to set more challenging targets. It has introduced a more efficient tracking system to monitor pupils' progress but this is at an early stage of development and is not being used efficiently enough to analyse differences in the rates of individual pupil's progress across reading, writing and mathematics. The school has also modified its target setting systems for individual pupils. There are some good examples of pupils valuing this, with regular references to them in lessons and a good number of pupils achieving their current target and moving on to the next one. In other classes, pupils are unsure of what they need to do to improve and targets are not reviewed regularly enough.

The monitoring of provision and its impact on pupils' progress is improving. The school has set up a more effective annual cycle for analysing progress on a termly basis. Progress of pupils in short-term projects is now linked more closely to the quality of the provision. The analysis of the shortcomings in the accommodation and the resulting changes has been effective, with staff and pupils appreciating the reduction of disturbances from other classes during lessons. Middle leaders have carried out further professional development which has helped to develop a better understanding of their roles. They have created good quality links with external expertise and have organised whole-school training to extend teachers' subject knowledge in the previous areas of weakness. They are in a better position to extend their range of strategies to monitor teaching and learning in order to analyse pupils' progress even further. The governing body is more rigorous in monitoring how policies are working out in the classroom. It is not involved closely enough in using national and school data to monitor the impact of improvement plans on pupils' progress. The developments in leadership and management, combined with the very positive attitudes of all staff to

improve their own work, are resulting in a strengthening in the capacity for future improvement.

The support from the local authority is good. It ensures that the school receives well-focussed, as well as regular advice and guidance for improving its provision. There is a good range of additional expertise provided to extend the staff's professional development when weaknesses are identified.

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

Mrs Margaret Shepherd
Additional Inspector

Annex

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

- Raise standards by:-
 - setting challenging targets for pupils and monitoring their progress towards them
 - improving the monitoring of provision and its impact on pupils' progress, particularly science.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by:-
 - better use of time
 - ensuring that learning activities are levelled in difficulty to meet the needs of all pupils.