

CfBT Inspection Services T 0300 1231231  
Suite 22 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
West Lancs Investment Centre [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

**Direct T** 01695 566934  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
[gtunncliffe@cfbt.com](mailto:gtunncliffe@cfbt.com)  
[www.cfbt-inspections.com](http://www.cfbt-inspections.com)



21 March 2011

Mr A Hadfield  
Headteacher  
Beechwood School  
Meredith Street  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 2PH

Dear Mr Hadfield,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Beechwood School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 23 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Discussions with the leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, the pupils and a representative from the local authority were also very helpful in evaluating the progress the school has made. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned for the time they gave to talk to me and for the welcome I received.

Since the December 2009 inspection, four members of teaching staff have left the school. Three new members of staff have been appointed on a temporary basis. One member of staff is acting as assistant headteacher to cover a maternity leave. Nursery provision has been extended to accommodate 52 children.

As a result of the inspection on 2 and 3 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 results for Key Stage 2 improved in 2010. They are broadly in line with the national average, with pupils making significantly better progress than expected. Attainment in English is similar to the national average, whereas attainment in mathematics is above this measure. More pupils attained the higher level in mathematics than in English. In contrast, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 declined. It remains significantly below the national average. Although children enter reception with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age, inconsistencies in teaching resulted in most pupils making satisfactory, rather than good, progress from their starting points. The school's tracking information suggests attainment across the school is variable. It is below average overall but improving. Attainment in reading and mathematics is stronger than in writing. Standards

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

are rising because more pupils are making expected and sometimes good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress is consistently strong in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress because of the additional support they receive in lessons. Although the school's data indicate achievement is improving, more work needs to be done to ensure all pupils and, in particular, pupils in Years 2 and 5 make consistently good progress in order to remedy previous underachievement.

Pupils are making better progress because the quality of teaching is improving. Although some inadequacies remain, there is a more-consistent approach to using assessment information to plan and deliver activities which meet the needs of most pupils. The whole-school focus on writing is leading to greater opportunities for pupils to write at length and for a variety of purposes across different subjects. Improvements to the quality of teachers' assessment and the marking of pupils' writing are having a positive impact on learning. As a result, pupils' attitude to and enjoyment of writing has improved. Pupils' progress in mathematics is also better because there is a more-consistent approach to developing mathematical skills across the school. Although pupils' work is marked and assessed on a regular basis, the quality of this feedback is not as well developed across the whole school as it is for writing activities. In addition, an over-reliance on worksheets in some year groups means some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. The opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other curriculum subjects remain underdeveloped.

The school is becoming more rigorous in its approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observations are focused on the quality of pupils' learning and lead to appropriate development points for individual teachers and the whole school. The recently implemented system for tracking pupils' progress is being used by senior leaders to identify any pupils who are at risk of making less-than-expected progress and to evaluate pupils' achievement in each class and for each subject. This is beginning to establish whole-school accountability for the progress all pupils make from when they enter the school. In addition, leaders and managers are now scrutinising planning and pupils' work to evaluate the quality of provision in English and mathematics. However, as these activities are not regular enough or sufficiently focused on learning, they are currently having limited impact in driving improvement. School improvement planning is focused on accurate priorities. Although there are some links between planned actions and pupils' attainment, these are not explicit enough to enable the school to measure their success accurately and swiftly. Members of the governing body have an increasing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is because the outcomes from school improvement actions have a greater focus during governing body meetings and the information the members receive from senior leaders is of a much improved quality.

Developments to the curriculum and to assembly themes are beginning to provide better opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and faiths.

The headteacher is committed to improving the school further. The development of whole-school leadership teams is beginning to distribute key responsibilities across all staff and members of the governing body. His accurate view of what needs to improve is shared among a cohesive team. This is leading to a common sense of purpose. Decisive action, coupled with improvements to the school's systems for monitoring and evaluation, are beginning to improve teaching. This is leading to most pupils making at least expected progress from their starting points. Nevertheless, as school leaders acknowledge, there is more work to be done to eradicate any inadequacies in teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress in order for attainment levels to match the national averages consistently.

The local authority has provided well-targeted and effective support. The work of consultants has supported the school in establishing secure assessment systems. In addition, the recent local authority review of the school's progress since the last inspection has supported leaders and managers in their monitoring and evaluation processes.

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

Miss Joanne Olsson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Annex**

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

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics and ensure consistent rates of progress
- Develop school self-evaluation and development planning
- Develop the pupils' understanding of a wider range of faiths and cultures by providing a wider range of opportunities within the curriculum