

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



08 Apr 2011

Mrs L Bardsley
Headteacher
St Peter's CofE Primary School
Oxford Street
Ashton-Under-Lyne
Lancashire
OL7 0NB

Dear Mrs Bardsley,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of St Peter's CofE Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 7 April 2011, for the time you gave to our planning meeting and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please could you pass on my thanks to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors, the representative of the local authority and the group of pupils who took time to speak with me.

As a result of the inspection on 2 February 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Since the 2010 inspection, one teacher has joined the school and another has remained on maternity leave. The school has embarked on a major building programme which is due to be completed in the summer term of 2011.

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.

Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils making expected progress is increasing particularly in English. There are indications that these improvements are continuing and, although they may fluctuate in 2011, the school has set ambitious targets for 2012.

The school has focused appropriately on developing writing and this is being extended through other subjects where pupils are given feedback about the use of punctuation and developing better sentence structures. This work is ongoing and is being supported by lessons on identifying features of writing and the use of grammar in texts.

Teachers have engaged in training focused on the use of assessment to support pupils' learning and extending their mathematical knowledge. These aspects are being

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implemented in their teaching and monitored by senior leaders. Consequently the quality of teaching is improving although there is some variability within this which the school is aware of. In the better lessons, teachers use assessment information well to ensure that all groups of pupils are working at a suitably challenging level and make good progress. In less successful lessons there is an over-emphasis on 'teacher talk' and the progression of learning to enable pupils to achieved desired outcomes is not sufficiently clear. Many pupils receive additional help which is supportive and reassuring although, too often, it is insufficiently challenging to enable them to make better progress or further develop their independence.

The local authority has provided helpful guidance and support particularly through a partnership with a National Leader in Education and support for middle leaders from a partner school through the 'Greater Manchester Challenge'. This has been effective in developing leadership and management at all levels within the school. Teachers are fully aware of, and committed to, the school's improvement plans which are monitored and reviewed regularly with the involvement of the governing body. The new assessment co-ordinator has introduced an electronic system for tracking pupils' progress. This system is enabling the school to identify weaknesses in the progress of groups and classes across the school.

The headteacher has a detailed, honest and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She is continuing to develop structures and systems to increase the school's capacity to improve. Leaders and managers have greater clarity and focus in their roles and the governors are involved in meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress every half term.

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

Mr Adrian Guy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - improving the accuracy and consistency of pupils' punctuation
 - teaching pupils to construct well-formed and detailed sentences which read correctly
 - making maximum use of writing in other subjects to further pupils' skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently make full use of assessment to provide work that challenges pupils of all abilities and builds securely on what they already know and can do
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and develop as independent learners
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all teachers with leadership and management responsibilities make a full and effective contribution to school improvement and development
 - developing tracking systems which provide a clear picture of how well different groups of pupils are achieving.