

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: gtunncliffe@cfbt.com



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Mrs Anne Read
Headteacher
Tonge Moor Community Primary School
Brierwood
Tonge Moor
Bolton
BL2 2PF

Dear Mrs Read

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Tonge Moor Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 October 2010 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my gratitude to the local authority and governing body for enabling representatives to speak with me.

Since the previous inspection, three new teachers have joined the school, two of whom are newly qualified and the deputy headteacher has taken on a class teaching role. There has also been a change to middle leadership roles with the creation of the position of phase leader. These teachers have greater responsibility for the achievement and quality of provision in two-year groups: Nursery and Reception; Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6.

As a result of the inspection on 3 and 4 February 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 is making **satisfactory** progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the inspection, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 in English remained broadly similar to the results in 2009 but rose significantly in mathematics. The provisional national assessment results in 2010 indicate the proportion attaining the expected Level 4 increased by 16% on the previous year and over a quarter of pupils attained the higher Level 5, this is 23% higher than in 2009. These improved results were not mirrored in Key Stage 1, where attainment fell in 2010 for the third consecutive year in writing and mathematics. In the majority of year groups, however, there are signs that attainment has begun to rise, particularly in mathematics.

Leaders and managers have made amendments to the timetable, curriculum and to teaching and learning to have a daily focus on strengthening pupils' knowledge and recall of number facts. This is paying dividends. Pupils are more secure in their knowledge, for example, of number bonds to ten and of times tables. In the best lessons, number facts are taught as fun games such as 'mathematics ping pong'. The rate at which pupils make progress in reading, writing and mathematics has also begun to improve. In most year groups the school's data indicate that over half of pupils are now making better progress. There is still much more work to do, however, to increase pupils' attainment and the progress they make in writing across the school before the school is reinspected.

Since the previous inspection the proportion of lessons in which pupils' progress is good or outstanding has improved. This is because the pace of learning has quickened, teachers challenge pupils in lessons more and have higher expectations, particularly for the more able. In over half of the lessons observed pupils made gains in their knowledge and applied their skills and understanding in purposeful activities. There is still some improvement needed to increase the quality of pupils' learning further. In some lessons, the activities are too easy for pupils. For example, pupils who are capable writers were asked to complete low-level worksheets and wrote just a few words or completed very basic colouring activities. In mathematics, some pupils answered correctly a large number of calculations and then had similar calculations to complete in subsequent lessons, despite having proven they were ready to move onto the next level in their learning.

Improvements to the marking of pupils' work are beginning to pay off in some classes. Teachers provide useful comments and indicate precisely what each pupil needs to do to improve his/her work. Teachers, in the best lessons, provide time for pupils to review and respond to the comments before starting their next piece of work. In a few classes, however, written comments are wholly congratulatory and are too difficult for pupils to be able to read independently.

The local authority's statement of action, agreed as fit for purpose by Ofsted, identifies appropriate support for the school. The authority has brokered support from an advanced skills teacher and a serving headteacher through Greater Manchester Challenge. This and advice from consultants in mathematics have helped the school to improve teaching and learning as well as strengthen its capacity to improve. A few of the activities in the authority's action plan do not relate well enough to each of the points for improvement identified at the last inspection. Despite this, overall, the effectiveness of the local authority's support has been satisfactory. Governors, for example, have been trained in how to interpret achievement data and feel they are in a stronger position to support and question school leaders.

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
Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve pupils' rate of progress and their attainment in writing and mathematics, in particular by strengthening teaching in order to:
 - increase the proportion of pupils who make at least the expected rate of progress
 - increase the proportion of pupils who meet or exceed the level expected for their age, by the time they leave the school
 - strengthen pupils' knowledge of basic number facts.
- Improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that:
 - much more teaching is of a good or better quality
 - the pace of lessons is brisker and expectations of what pupils can do are higher, so that all pupils make gains in their learning in every lesson
 - the more-able pupils tackle sufficiently challenging work
 - marking helps pupils to improve their work.