

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



29 June 2011

Miss L Torrance
Headteacher
Castleton Primary School
Hillcrest Road
Castleton
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL11 2QD

Dear Miss Torrance,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Castleton Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 June 2011, for the time you gave to our planning meeting and for the information which you and your senior leadership team provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the representatives of the local authority and the group of pupils who took time to speak with me.

As a result of the inspection on 19 November 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Since the inspection the school has experienced a significant turnover of teaching staff and has managed a number of long-term absences. This year all the teachers in Key Stage 2 are new to the school.

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.

In 2010 attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics improved to be broadly in line with the national average and was above the school's target. However, standards in English declined to below the national average and the school narrowly missed its targets. Early unvalidated results of the 2011 national key stage tests show that the decline in attainment in English has been halted and attainment is now broadly average. Performance in reading is stronger than in writing which the school has identified as an area for improvement. Pupils' attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has also improved. However, results at the end of Year 2 remain below average.

The school's comprehensive tracking systems show that the rate of pupils' progress is improving. However, assessment is not fully secure, particularly in writing, which means that the picture of pupils' achievement indicated by the school's data may be overgenerous. The

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

school is aware of this issue and is undertaking a process of moderation to ensure greater accuracy in teachers' assessments.

Observations of teaching conducted with the headteacher during the visit show that the overall quality of teaching is not as good as at the previous inspection. In lessons pupils are well behaved, they enjoy their learning and relationships with adults are strong. In particular, older pupils showed great enthusiasm and maturity in their dress rehearsal for their end of term musical. However, in the lessons seen, teachers were often not clear enough about how activities enabled pupils to achieve the intended learning. As a result, opportunities were missed to address misconceptions and move learning forward at a faster pace. The school is working successfully with the local authority to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure greater continuity of learning in lessons.

The school's improvement plan indicates clear priorities and includes statements of intended impact and success. Some of these are concise and measurable but the school recognises that some could be sharpened further to enable better monitoring of improvement. Members of the governing body have undertaken training to develop their role. They are aware of the need for greater rigour when monitoring the progress against actions in the school's improvement plan to provide greater challenge and support and ensure the school continues to improve.

The headteacher has an honest and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning across the school. The school is managing a period of staffing instability satisfactorily and has maintained pupils' progress with effectively targeted support and intervention from the senior leadership team. Together with resources and strategies for raising attainment, leaders have benefited from the support of the School Improvement Partner to ensure a determined focus on pupils' learning and progress. This has been particularly useful in enabling school leaders to secure satisfactory progress in relation to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

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 on 19 November 2009

- Raise attainment for all pupils, particularly in mathematics, by at least maintaining the current good quality of teaching in order to meet the challenging targets that it has set for itself by June 2010.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that the current good progress seen in lessons becomes evident over time in performance data.
- Improve the quality of development planning by defining more sharply intended outcomes.