

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)



6 July 2011

Mrs S Fitt  
Headteacher  
Lancaster Ridge Primary School  
Keswick Road  
Lancaster  
Lancashire  
LA1 3LE

Dear Mrs Fitt,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Lancaster Ridge Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 July 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 the Chair of the Governing Body, local authority adviser, staff and pupils who spoke with me.

There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection. A teacher who was on a temporary contract has been made permanent and part of the senior leadership team. There have been new appointments to Year 4 and the Specialist Education Resource Facility (SERF). The SERF teacher is the special needs coordinator for the whole school. The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher has returned from a secondment. A number of teachers have changed year groups and five teaching assistants have been appointed. The deputy headteacher was appointed just before the previous inspection.

As a result of the inspection on 21 and 22 October 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.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or statements is much higher than average. They are well catered for in mainstream classes and in the SERF and achieve as well as or better than similar pupils nationally. Pupils of all abilities are now making faster progress in each year group as their key skills are developed more successfully. However, overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 remains well below average due to slow progress in the past. The work of most pupils in the current Year 6 class is well below the level expected for their age. There is an exceptionally high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in the cohort, but other pupils have not achieved as well as they should. The class has experienced significant

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disruption and inadequate teaching in the past, which has slowed pupils' progress and left gaps in their basic skills. The inadequacies have been tackled so that pupils across the school are now receiving continuous and better-quality teaching. Attainment in the Year 5 class is much higher and more in line with age-related expectations.

Staff have shown drive and commitment to improve teaching and make lessons more exciting. The introduction of a themed approach to topic work has been met with enthusiasm by both staff and pupils. The deputy headteacher is effectively leading developments in curriculum planning to ensure all subjects are covered and topics are relevant and interesting. Pupils have welcomed increased opportunities to apply their writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum. They find the increased opportunities for practical work and outdoor learning motivating and highly enjoyable. However, opportunities for pupils to work on extended, independent pieces of writing and mathematical investigations are limited in some classes. Consequently, pupils are not building the stamina and ability to sustain the concentration needed for extended tasks. School leaders are aware that careful planning is required to provide these opportunities and to ensure key reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught systematically and progressively in each class. They are taking appropriate action to secure this, including more rigorous monitoring of teaching and tracking of pupils' progress.

Teachers are using assessment more effectively to plan activities that are better matched to pupils' abilities. The majority of pupils understand their learning targets and apply them. Their work is regularly marked with encouraging comments and some pointers for improvement. However, marking and follow-up are not always insistent enough to ensure that pupils act on the advice given, so some errors are repeated. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children's choices are being carefully monitored to ensure they extend their learning in all areas. The revised 'Learning Journey' records are used well to plan learning opportunities that are matched to children's needs and interests. Children play and learn happily together and adults intervene effectively to help them extend their knowledge and skills.

School leaders are driving improvements with determination. Staff are enthusiastic, committed and fully focused on raising pupils' achievement. They are welcoming and encouraging so that pupils feel very well cared for and safe. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well, showing consideration for others. The local authority has provided appropriate support to teachers and leaders and staff have embraced the professional development opportunities provided. Teaching has become more exciting and assessment is being used more effectively to plan relevant activities in lessons. The capacity to sustain further improvement has been increased with appointments to leadership and teaching staff. 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  
Jean Kendall  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 21 and 22 October 2009**

- Accelerate progress, especially in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
  - raising expectations among staff of what pupils can do, particularly in the presentation and accuracy of their work in mathematics
  - ensuring pupils' punctuation and grammatical skills are more fully developed.
  
- Increase the proportion of consistently good teaching across the school by:
  - using assessment information more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
  - ensuring the pace and challenge in lessons sustain pupils' interest.
  
- Develop target setting and marking so that pupils know how to improve.
  
- Ensure the choices children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage are closely monitored so that they access the full range of experiences.