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13 July 2011

Mr R Walthall
Headteacher
Stansfield Hall Church of England/Free Church Primary School
Todmorden Road
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Littleborough
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OL15 9PR

Dear Mr Walthall,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Stansfield Hall Church of England/Free Church Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 July 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Also, thank you to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body for meeting with me and to the pupils who spoke to me.

Since the last inspection the school roll has declined and reductions have been made to staffing. As a result, the number of classes in the school has reduced from four to three. Significant instability to staffing has occurred leading to a considerable proportion of temporary staff for sustained periods.

As a result of the inspection on 13 January 2010, the school was asked to tackle 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 good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The outcomes of the Year 6 national test results in 2010 show an overall improving trend for pupils' progress. The progress made by pupils in English was significantly stronger than the progress made in mathematics. The levels of pupils' attainment in English rose compared to 2009 whereas in mathematics it has remained broadly the same. Taken together, they represent an improvement over time. In 2011, school tracking data and the provisional outcomes of Year 6 national tests, show accelerated progress across the school especially in mathematics. Measures of pupils' progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 show significant improvement notably in mathematics. Levels of attainment remained broadly average in English but rose sharply in mathematics to be around the nationally-expected level. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 remained broadly the same in each year. Progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of all pupils and shows similar improvement.

January 2011

PROTECT-INSPECTION



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Since the last inspection, the proportion and consistency of good teaching has increased. Monitoring by the school's senior leaders and by the local authority, show clear evidence of improvements to teachers' planning, the classroom learning environment and to the emphasis given to developing pupils' basic skills. Inspection evidence confirms this. Of particular note is the improvement to the opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in cross-curricular topics or themes. Pupils who spoke to the inspector said that they find the topics interesting and fun. They said they learn better when lessons are organised this way. For example, one topic was 'let's go camping.' This included mathematics activities to calculate a list of items needed such as a first aid kit, tent, sleeping bags and a torch. Other tasks developed pupils' persuasive writing such as when pupils designed a poster to advertise the campsite. Work also covered designing a shelter, investigating waterproof materials and plotting geographical coordinates.

The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy headteacher, has improved the procedures for monitoring the school's work. There is robust scrutiny of teachers' planning, a regular programme of lesson observations and a thorough tracking system to record pupils' attainment and progress. These are systematically recorded and used to identify individual professional development needs. Procedures to evaluate the outcomes of the monitoring so that the senior leaders and the governing body are accurately and regularly informed about whole school performance are at an early stage of development. Leaders have successfully ensured that the outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improved. There is a planned programme of continuous provision which includes a range of learning activities. The development of a school garden is something about which the school community is justifiably proud. It is too soon to judge the impact of this new resource on pupils' learning.

The role of the governing body has improved through greater distribution of responsibilities, targeted training and an increased range of opportunities for governors to observe the work of the school first hand. Link governors are now in place and they liaise regularly with each of the classes. They visit lessons, talk to teachers and pupils and look at work and data. Feedback is given to the curriculum committee and to the full governing body. The Chair of the Governing Body meets frequently with the headteacher to discuss the school's performance. Minutes of the governing body show improved support and challenge to school leaders. However, the information received from the outcomes of school monitoring and especially the resulting evaluations, is embryonic. Good support is received from the local authority consultants and the School Improvement Partner.

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 John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 13 January 2010

- Ensure that all teaching is good and better by:
 - improving the consistency with which the needs of the more-able pupils are met
 - ensuring that the best practice is shared.
- Improve the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement by providing consistently-planned opportunities for pupils to use their English and mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders and governors by ensuring that they are fully involved in checking the impact of the actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils.