

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566852
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
chuxley@cfbt.com



2 December 2011

Mrs J Hodgkins
Headteacher
Petteril Bank School
Burnett Road
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA1 3BX

Dear Mrs Hodgkins

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Petteril Bank School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 1 December 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, governors, school improvement officer and leader of the 'U Can Shine' programme, who gave up their time to speak with me.

There have been several changes to teaching and support staff since the school's previous inspection: one new teacher has been appointed and staffing is now stable.

As a result of the inspection on 29 and 30 November 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 has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Results attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2011 indicate an improving picture, with more pupils achieving national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Although the school's performance continues to be below the national figure, the gap is narrowing and the improvement trend is steeper than that found nationally.

There were only seven pupils in the cohort that completed Key Stage 2 in 2011. Test results indicate that nearly all of them made expected progress. Their achievement was particularly strong in reading. Standards of writing continue to be below national expectations but observations from lessons and from the school's reliable data indicate that most students now make better and more sustained progress from starting points which are typically very low.

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Attendance levels have improved and most students are punctual, keen to learn and well-behaved.

Pupils comment that they receive an exciting curriculum that provides them with opportunities to learn new skills in different ways. Older pupils enthuse about their experiences at a local archive centre. They relish the 'U Can Shine' programme which challenges them to set themselves targets and continually assess their own performance in sports and in their wider learning. The school works hard to develop pupils' literacy skills, as evidenced by celebratory displays of their work throughout the building. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy writing in the imaginative role-play areas and develop a sense of self-worth through carefully designed activities, both indoors and outdoors, including those they select for themselves. Teachers have worked hard to plan sequential learning through which pupils' independence is fostered and their skills developed. They have a consistent approach to extending the range of pupils' vocabulary and ensuring that spelling patterns are recognised and applied. Pupils write for varied purposes and audiences and show increasing awareness of the importance of language choice in their writing. The literacy coordinator is a good role model. Her confidence and capacity to influence other teachers' practice has grown in response to effective support.

The quality and consistency of teaching has improved under the tenacious and insightful leadership of the headteacher. She has supported teachers in identifying and addressing any underachievement. The school has reorganised upper Key Stage 2 to enable greater challenge to be provided for the more-able learners while providing high quality support for those whose skills need boosting. All staff know the pupils well as individuals and are increasingly focused on accelerating their progress while maintaining a nurturing approach. Relationships within school are strong and the motivation of both staff and pupils is palpable. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the vast majority of pupils concentrate well. Teachers assess pupils' progress continuously and accurately. They make effective use of plenary sessions to identify any learning gaps and build pupils' self-esteem. They use varied questioning styles and ensure that all pupils participate in discussions. Teachers' marking is detailed and there is a shared expectation that pupils read their comments and act upon them appropriately. Most pupils have a good understanding of the next steps they should take to improve their work. One commented, 'The most important thing about the school is that everyone really helps us to do our best.'

The school has worked hard to engage parents and carers in their children's learning. An increasing number of parents and carers are involved in activities such as supporting younger children's 'early work' when they first arrive at school in the morning. There is a high level of attendance to open afternoons and special assemblies. New parent governors have been appointed and are enthusiastic in their roles. The school is embarking on an 'Achievement for All' programme to develop further parental partnership work.

The local authority has provided well-judged and proportionate support to the school. The work of the literacy and numeracy consultants has been effective in improving teaching. The school improvement officer has provided clear guidance and monitored the school's progress



accurately and regularly. The headteacher has established effective links with other schools in order to enhance provision further. The school's increasingly outward-facing approach, forensic self-evaluation and determination to accelerate learning and improve life chances for all its pupils mean that it is well placed to secure improvement.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Gornall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 29 and 30 November 2010

- Raise attainment, especially in writing, by:
 - continuing to develop a curriculum that interests and excites pupils and provides a coherence in developing basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology through different themes and topics
 - involving parents and carers more in supporting their children's learning.
- Ensure that teaching, learning and progress in all lessons are at least good by ensuring greater consistency in:
 - the use of the final parts of lessons to check on how much all pupils have learned
 - how well pupils know, understand and use the targets set for them
 - the pace and focus of learning when pupils are working independently.