

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

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566932

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: hcarnall@cfbt.com



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Mrs A Gray
Headteacher
Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School
Birkrig
Digmoor
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 9BN

Dear Mrs Gray

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with additional focus on behaviour:
monitoring inspection of Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 12 January 2012 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. As this was an unannounced visit, it was appreciated that the information and documents I required were readily available as soon as they were requested. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils who met with me and to the representatives of the governing body and the local authority who attended the feedback discussions at the end of the day.

The recent completion of refurbishment work on the school's two buildings means that the Nursery and Reception classes are now housed together in the same building, to form the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Several members of staff left the school in the last academic year and six new teachers were appointed from September 2011. Four of these are at an early stage in their teaching career, while two were appointed to the roles of deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher following a rigorous recruitment process.

As a result of the inspection on 9 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 the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is good.



Key Stage 2 test results in 2011 showed that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was average in mathematics but well below average in English. This indicated good progress in mathematics but variability in English, due to the small group of pupils who had reached above average standards in Key Stage 1 but failed to achieve the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6. However, a third of pupils made good progress in Key Stage 2 to reach average levels in English, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Girls achieved better than boys overall, particularly in mathematics.

Despite the longstanding trend of low attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, small improvements were evident in the 2011 assessments of Year 2 pupils in reading and writing, and particularly in mathematics. Writing remains the weaker element in English at both key stages and pupils' skills in this area are below average. However, there are early signs that the school's actions to improve this are beginning to bear fruit. For example, a high priority is placed on providing more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes, promoted by 'working walls' and writing prompts in classroom displays. Teachers' more detailed marking of writing provides clear guidance to pupils about what they are doing well and what they should work on to improve further. Staff are aware of the need to build in sufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to this in follow-up work. The school's rigorous tracking systems provide evidence of teachers' increasingly accurate assessments and of the improving rates of progress being made by pupils between Reception and Year 6. Tracking information is being used well to target specific groups or individual pupils for intervention programmes or additional support where it is needed.

Changes made to the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection are enabling staff in nursery and Reception classes to work and plan more collaboratively to begin to improve children's progress. This is done in an attractive and spacious shared environment which incorporates an open-plan kitchen and well-planned learning areas. Children play, share and work well together. Adults place a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills through storytelling, role play and general conversation as well as opportunities to practise their early reading and writing skills. The covered outdoor area, with safety surface, provides a useful extension to the continuous learning indoors and is much enjoyed by the children. Beyond this, plans are being finalised to develop the outside space further, as the grounds are currently hampered by poor drainage.

Improved planning for transition into the Year 1 curriculum is helping to provide appropriate activities for those pupils who have not yet achieved some of their key early learning goals. Short observations of pupils' learning and progress during this inspection concentrated mainly on Key Stage 1 classes. The whole-school commitment to regular and focused teaching of phonics in ability groups is having a positive impact on pupils' reading. Teachers have good knowledge of the progression of skills that pupils need to develop confidence in blending sounds to read unfamiliar words. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were observed enjoying their phonic sessions with teachers and support staff, recognising and saying out loud the sounds

made by particular combinations of letters, then giving examples of where they may be used. 'Thermometer!' called out one boy excitedly when practising how to pronounce the initial 'th' sound. In another group, pupils were accurately spelling out polysyllabic words in response to the teacher's clear enunciation of the sounds within them, e.g. 'animals; garden; another; everyone'. They responded well to the challenge of adding other words orally and constructing a sentence that incorporated their key words.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed more effective and rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate its performance. This information feeds into the school's improvement planning and professional development programme. Good practice is shared both within the school and with others in the local collaboration of schools, as joint training takes place regularly. Training opportunities extend to teaching assistants and other support staff, with the result that their skills are deployed more effectively in promoting pupils' learning.

The school's behaviour policy has recently been reviewed with the involvement of pupils, staff and parents. Pupils who spoke to the inspector and parents who responded to a recent school survey express very positive views about the improvements in behaviour since the start of this academic year. Evidence from this inspection confirms that pupils' behaviour has improved, both in lessons and around the school and playground. Pupils respond well to the clear systems for promoting good behaviour, attitudes, attendance and punctuality. The 'good to be green' strategy is used consistently by teachers and understood by pupils who say that adults treat them fairly. Older pupils are keen to set a good example to younger children and help them to understand and follow the 'respect' expectations that are displayed around school. Pupils enjoy the rewards and team points system and the recognition they can achieve in celebration assemblies. They also recognise the positive impact of the learning mentor who keeps a check on pupils who may need support with their behaviour. The 'Cool to be Kind' displays around the classrooms demonstrate their understanding of and commitment to looking out for each other and behaving well.

The improvements noted since the previous inspection have been made possible by key changes in the school's culture resulting from effective leadership that has also benefited from good support and challenge from the local authority. The school has challenged underperformance and has raised expectations. The quality of teaching and learning is improving so that a higher proportion is now good. Teachers are held accountable for the progress made by pupils. The governing body's recruitment of high quality leaders to complement the skills of the headteacher has made a significant contribution to the school's better capacity for sustained improvement. This senior leadership team has driven up the pace of improvement recently and evidence of the impact of senior leaders' actions can already be seen in the improvements made to teaching and pupils' learning and behaviour. Teamwork is good and staff morale is high. There is a shared understanding that all of these

factors should now become securely embedded in the school's practice and lead to rising attainment across the school, particularly in pupils' reading and writing.

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

Marguerite Murphy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - developing the use of the outdoor areas to provide an equal range of learning to that in the indoor areas
 - placing an added emphasis on the teaching of early writing skills so that children make better progress.

- Improve progress and raise attainment in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring work is always accurately targeted to build on prior learning and promote good progress, especially in the transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage work and the National Curriculum
 - ensuring that additional adults are effectively and actively engaged with pupils in promoting learning
 - facilitating the sharing of good practice between teachers across the key stages
 - injecting more rigour into monitoring to ensure that all of the above are implemented consistently and are making the intended improvements to learning.