

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566862  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:**  
rcowley@cfbt.com



6 July 2012

Mr Wightman  
Executive Headteacher  
Sowerby Village CofE VC Primary School  
St Peter's Avenue  
Sowerby  
Sowerby Bridge  
Halifax  
West Yorkshire  
HX6 1HB

Dear Mr Wightman

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Sowerby Village CofE VC Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 July 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2011. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures - satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - good

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Executive board, the Diocesan Director of Education for Wakefield Diocese and the Director of Children and Young People's Services for Calderdale.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCauley  
Additional inspector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011**

- Raise attainment and improve achievement in all subjects, but particularly in writing, by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in a range of subjects
  - using assessment information from the Early Years Foundation Stage to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good throughout the school by:
  - making sure pupils know how to improve their work through better-quality marking and feedback
  - ensuring work planned takes account of pupils' previous learning and reflects pupils' interests and abilities
  - ensuring teachers use the skills of teaching assistants more effectively.
  
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - setting challenging targets that are clearly based on pupils' standards when they join Year 1
  - embedding the tracking of pupils' performance so that rapid action can be taken to tackle underachievement
  - ensuring that leaders and managers set a clear direction for school improvement
  - applying school systems rigorously and working more effectively with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance.



## **Special measures: monitoring of Sowerby Village CofE VC Primary School**

### **Report from the third monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 July 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, met with the executive headteacher, seconded acting deputy headteacher, teaching staff, Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also spoke with pupils. He observed 10 lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Internal and external evaluative reports were also examined.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in March 2012 there have been many staffing changes. At the end of March 2012 the headteacher went on long term absence due to ill health. The Local Leader of Education has worked since April 2012 as the executive headteacher for two and a half days per week. Since the end of May 2012 an acting deputy headteacher has worked one day per week on secondment from another local authority primary school. The secondment will become full-time from September 2012 for two terms. A teaching assistant joined Key Stage 1 in mid April supporting a pupil with a statement of special educational needs.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Achievement is starting to improve. It will take time for improvements in the quality of teaching to result in substantially improved achievement. Pupils' progress is variable and is more rapid in classes where the quality of teaching is stronger. Progress made by teachers in the better use of assessment is improving slowly. Pupils apply their basic skills well in subjects. Pupils were observed in a Key Stage 1 English lesson calculating how many of their friends had not voted in the 'Mini-beast of the Year Competition' by subtracting the number of pupils who had voted from those present. Leaders and managers monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievement is now more robust. Slower progress continues to be made in improving achievement in writing. Leaders and managers rightly identified there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to write for extended periods of time. They introduced 'Friday Writing' to provide greater opportunities for extended writing earlier this half term. There has been insufficient time since its introduction to evaluate its success in raising attainment.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise attainment and improve achievement in all subjects, but particularly in writing – satisfactory

#### **The quality of teaching**



The quality of teaching is improving well throughout school. In 30% of lessons observed the quality of teaching was outstanding. Inconstancies remain in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. In lessons where teaching is stronger, teachers match learning tasks precisely to pupils' specific levels of ability and learning proceeds at a brisk pace. Teachers use questioning well in lessons to probe and challenge pupils' understanding of how to apply specific skills. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers promoting rapid and effective learning.

Most teachers plan learning activities taking account of pupils' prior learning. Sometimes pupils of average ability are insufficiently challenged. Pupils' exercise books show they are now required to complete more work each day. Pupils know their targets for improvement and how they can work towards achieving them. Pupils assess their progress in learning more during lessons. Marking is used well in most classes to identify the next steps in learning so pupils know how to improve their work. Teachers' use of information and communication technology is developing well.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good throughout the school – good

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, enabling lessons to proceed without interruption. In one class pupils' behaviour has improved immensely because of skilful behaviour management by the class teacher and support from leaders and managers.

Attendance has improved. Rigorous systems are in place for checks to be carried out before staff are employed. The school business manager meticulously maintains records of these checks.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Robust improvements in the quality of teaching are a clear indicator of much stronger leadership and management. Leaders and managers now drive improvement more securely. Since the previous monitoring inspection teachers agree they have been well supported by leaders and managers in developing a culture for success. Teachers are now being given sufficient time to embed teaching skills and techniques developed following working with local authority consultants and are securing improvement in lessons. Changes to the school day enable learning to flow effectively for pupils.

Lesson observations taking place with no notice give leaders and managers an accurate view of the day to day quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Data analysis and the tracking of pupils' progress remain at an early stage of development. Targets are



insufficiently challenging for specific groups of pupils, such as those who are more-able. There remains a lack of precision in systems used for tracking pupils' progress which is hampering more rapid improvement.

The IEB continues to focus relentlessly on bringing about rapid improvement. School leaders are held to account robustly.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- improve the leadership and management of the school – good

### **External support**

The local authority continues to support the school well. Local authority support has reduced slightly enabling the school to embed and refine essential processes to secure further improvement.

