

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 566930
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
enquiries@cfbt.com



5 October 2012

Mrs Rachel Ingrams
Headteacher
Silloth Primary School
Liddel Street
Silloth
Wigton
Cumbria
CA7 4DR

Dear Mrs Ingrams

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Silloth Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 October 2012, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the governors, the local authority adviser whom I met and the group of pupils who talked to me about their experiences of school.

An experienced headteacher was newly appointed at the time of the section 5 inspection. Since then staffing has been more stable and a new assistant headteacher has been appointed internally. A Key Stage 2 teacher was seconded to the school for the spring and summer term. A number of staff returned from maternity leave in September and a newly qualified teacher was appointed. The coordination of literacy has recently been taken over by a teacher in the school because the previous leader has started maternity leave. A few staff have moved classes within the school. There are a few new governors.

As a result of the inspection on 12 January 2012, 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 is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection pupils' achievement has improved overall, including in English, in response to more consistently effective teaching. The most recent unvalidated national test results for Year 6 pupils in July 2012 improved significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making at least the expected two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to 2 improved and was better than 2011 national averages in English and mathematics. The school's challenging targets were met for attainment and progress. Pupil premium funding was well targeted and these pupils accelerated their progress. Improvement was not as marked in Key Stage 1 with attainment remaining similar to the previous year when attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below average.

January 2012



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

School leaders recognise that, having focused tightly on accelerating progress in Key Stage 2, it is time to accelerate progress further in Key Stage 1 and the updated improvement plan reflects this.

Based on 2012 summer term assessments, school data show that pupils' progress has accelerated significantly since the previous inspection in all year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2 and for all groups of pupils. Pupils are not fully on track to meet the challenging targets set for them by Year 6. However, the learning and progress observed in lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 and work in pupils' books show marked improvement and sustains the progress evident in school data.

The headteacher has focused the school very successfully on raising expectations and achievement in English especially. Teaching and support staff have been strategically deployed to strengthen progress in literacy and to support underachieving pupils.

The curriculum provides far more opportunities for writing. Pupils write for a far wider range of purposes and with greater enthusiasm because the tasks are linked to powerful reading texts that now underpin the whole curriculum or to topics that engage pupils.

More accurate assessment of pupils' progress in English and mathematics and a more consistent approach to lesson planning have led to a better match of tasks to pupils' different needs. On occasions, more-able pupils do not tackle challenging tasks early enough in lessons.

Better tracking of pupils' progress and analysis of the data by leaders, including core subject leaders, have identified underperformance and targeted additional support more effectively. Consequently, closely targeted interventions, especially for older pupils, have helped many to catch up on previous underperformance. More frequent pupil-progress review meetings are holding staff more closely to account for pupils' progress.

A whole-school approach to marking and feedback is accelerating progress. Pupils' work is marked more frequently to more consistent criteria, particularly for writing. Pupils have a clearer understanding of what they are aiming to achieve and they receive more helpful feedback on how to improve. Pupils like checking their own work and say it really helps them to improve.

A more consistent approach to improving handwriting and presentation has been effective. Spelling errors are identified, pupils make corrections and there is an increased focus on learning spellings. However, spelling remains a weaker area in Key Stage 2.

Improvements to teaching reading have accelerated progress. Pupils have responded very well to better incentives to read at home and parents are more closely involved. The stock of reading scheme and library books has been broadened and updated and now has greater appeal to pupils. Classroom work on reading is better organised so weaker readers receive daily additional support and pupils enjoy reading more.

There are more opportunities for pupils to learn independently but these are not all monitored closely for their impact. Attractive reading areas in every classroom have been introduced. In every Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage classroom, there are writing tables with links to the learning theme where pupils can go and write. There are more tasks in class that encourage independent research and there are plans to develop the now more regular homework tasks.

The school's capacity to improve has increased. Middle leaders' skills in monitoring and evaluation have been strengthened through working alongside the headteacher and the local authority adviser. Two core subject leaders are following the Middle Leadership Development Programme run by the National College of School Leadership with their individual focus areas closely linked to school priorities. Core subject leaders are carrying out more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the impact of provision on pupils' progress. As a result, areas to improve have been identified and improved. For example, the literacy leader, having recognised inconsistent practice in whole-class reading sessions, planned and led training and improvements are now evident across the school.

The best practice in teaching and learning is shared more effectively. Middle leaders regularly run whole-school in-service training and, consequently, practice is more effective in many areas. For example, there is now a more consistent approach to using mental arithmetic.

The role of the governing body has strengthened. There is a clearer understanding of their work and a greater rigour in monitoring the school's performance and holding the leaders to account.

The local authority statement of action is judged as fit for purpose. The local authority provides good support and effective challenge. The school-specific monitoring group holds leaders and governors rigorously to account. The general adviser has supported leaders in monitoring the school's work and provided effective training for governors and staff. The school has worked well with local partner schools to develop and share practice.

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

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2012

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in English by:
 - making sure the English curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to learn independently and to apply and develop their literacy skills across the curriculum
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback in order to help pupils know the next steps in their learning.

- Strengthen the school's capacity to secure and sustain improvement by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of leaders, particularly middle leaders, in robustly monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum so they can intervene to make improvements
 - ensuring that good practice in teaching is shared in order to make the quality of teaching consistently good or better.