

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



23 November 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 21 and 22 November 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 fourth 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 - good

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 fourth monitoring inspection on 21 and 22 November 2012

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, met with the executive headteacher, headteacher designate, teaching staff, Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also spoke with pupils. He observed six lessons jointly with the headteacher designate plus four other lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Internal and external evaluative reports were also scrutinised.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection in July 2012 there have been many staffing changes. The executive headteacher is reducing his leadership responsibilities within school as the headteacher designate, who will take up appointment as headteacher in January 2013, takes on greater responsibility for leadership and management. A deputy headteacher has been appointed and is expected to take up post in January 2013. The part-time teacher in Year 3 joined the school in October on secondment from a local primary school and is currently acting as assistant headteacher. The Year 1 teacher, who is responsible for the management of literacy, is new to the school, as are the two newly qualified teachers in Year 4 and Year 5. The teacher responsible for managing Early Years Foundation Stage is now working part time and sharing this responsibility with another teacher. Pupils are now taught in single year groups except in Year 5 and Year 6 where they are taught by ability. Teaching assistants are allocated to specific year groups. The timings and make-up of the school day have changed.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The proportion of pupils increasing the rate at which they learn in lessons is improving well in reading, writing and mathematics. The latest analysis from school shows the speed at which pupils learn has improved exceptionally well in Year 6 and well in Year 2. No recent information on how well other year groups are progressing in their learning is currently available. School information on how well pupils attain shows that standards attained by pupils compared to all pupils nationally are also improving, although these will not improve substantially until the improvements in the quality of teaching are consistently in place in all year groups. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement in all subjects, but particularly in writing – good



The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching in lessons is improving. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers set pupils work which is as hard as they can cope with because they now have much more information on how well pupils are learning. A few teachers increase the level of challenge for specific pupils as they assess how well they are learning during lessons. Most teachers question pupils well during lessons to increase their understanding of how well their teaching is helping pupils to learn. In a few lessons, teachers revise facts that pupils have learned previously to support their new learning. An example of this occurred in a Year 6 literacy lesson when pupils learned quickly about Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and supplemented this learning with historical knowledge about Henry VIII and the Tudors. Many teachers miss opportunities to use information and communication technology well to speed up learning. Marking continues to improve well. Most teachers identify how pupils can improve further when marking work, although this is not as strong in Year 5. Teaching assistants make an exceptionally positive contribution to improving achievement in lessons and through providing additional support for pupils in extra English and mathematics teaching.

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 are keen to learn in exciting lessons where teachers help them to learn well. Pupils who do not always find it easy to behave well in lessons are guided effectively by teachers who calm them down and manage their behaviour very successfully.

Pupils enjoy attending school and attendance is better now than previously. Opening school earlier allows pupils to settle to learning sooner and ensures the vast majority are now more punctual.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The appointment of new staff, particularly the headteacher designate and deputy headteacher are proving pivotal in increasing and sustaining improvement. In a very short time the headteacher designate, ably supported by the executive headteacher and members of the IEB, has strongly improved how well teachers teach in lessons and this is helping pupils to learn faster in lessons. School leaders have a good understanding of what constitutes good teaching and explain clearly how they aim to further improve the quality of teaching.



Members of the IEB make a powerful contribution to improving the school further. They ask very searching questions of the headteacher designate and all teachers to ensure that they are doing their best to help all pupils learn well.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on areas for improvement:

- Improve the leadership and management of the school – outstanding

External support

Good support from the local authority is enabling the school to improve. The recent review conducted by a local authority representative and an independent consultant identified accurate areas for further improvement.

