

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 566939
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: glaw@cfbt.com



18 December 2012

Mrs Sharon Joyce
Headteacher
Swinton Queen Primary School
Queen Street
Swinton
Mexborough
South Yorkshire
S64 8NE

Dear Mrs Joyce

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Swinton Queen Primary School

Following my visit with Charles Lowry, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 17 December 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors analysed a range of management documents, including those relating to school self-evaluation and development planning, pupils' achievement and the improvement of teaching.

Context

No significant change has occurred since the inspection.

Main findings

School leaders are introducing new approaches to teaching writing which give pupils more stimulating and interesting topics to write about. Discussion and drama are used as a means for enabling pupils to prepare their ideas for writing. Teachers are learning how to use these methods effectively from a nearby school that has an outstanding track record in pupils' writing achievement. The school's self-evaluations indicates that pupils' motivation for writing is already increasing.

School leaders have devised a training programme for those teachers in whose lessons achievement and teaching are judged to require improvement. At the heart of this programme is lesson observation followed by guidance to each teacher according to their individual needs. Leaders' overall evaluation of lessons is broadly accurate but the guidance does not always pinpoint precisely the weaknesses in pupils' achievement and how teaching methods need to improve to remove these weaknesses.

Senior leaders have significantly improved their evaluation of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics since the inspection, mostly as a result of much better methods for recording and analysing teachers' assessments. As a result, they have a much more accurate view of where improvement is most needed to raise standards across the school. This has enabled them to take a second look at the targets set for each teacher as part of their performance management and to increase them where necessary. While the new assessment records provide clear information about how each pupil's standards of attainment compares to the national expectation for their age, they do not give sufficient information about their rate of progress over time. Therefore it is not always clear whether pupils' standards represent good progress or whether they are coasting.

The Governing Body has used the inspection report very effectively as a basis for rigorously evaluating their support and challenge for the school. They have taken appropriate steps to ensure that all members are involved in scrutinising information about the school's performance and they have a much better understanding of the need to focus their questions on how pupils' achievement can be improved. Occasionally, judgements made by school leaders and the Governing Body are not strong drivers for improvement because they are not clear about the distinction between 'requires improvement' and 'good'.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- Increase the impact of lesson observations on improving teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers are aware of the impact of their lessons on the progress of all groups of pupils and how they can accelerate this progress where required.
 - following up observations with programmes of support, tailored to each teacher's needs, that will help them to remove weaknesses that slow pupils' progress.
- Use assessment information to evaluate pupils' rate of progress as a means for ensuring that all pupils are doing their best.
- Avoid clouding judgements about aspects of teaching and achievement that require improvement by indicating that they could also be good.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has brokered effective support for the school from its own officers, a nearby outstanding school and a leading teacher from a neighbouring authority. They systematically review this support to ensure it is having a positive impact on teaching and achievement. The school benefits considerably from collaborative work within a 'learning community' of local schools. This partnership has contributed to significantly improved pupils' achievement in mathematics and to more accurate teacher assessment of pupils' work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

Her Majesty's Inspector