

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 **Direct T** 01695 566932
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 01695 729320
www.ofsted.gov.uk **Direct email:** jrbennett@cfbt.com



11 December 2012

Ms Jan Wiggins
Headteacher
Bents Green School
Ringinglow Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S11 7TB

Dear Ms Wiggins

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Bents Green School

Following my visit to your school on 11 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, other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated and other documents were reviewed that record actions taken in relation to key aspects of the plan.

Context

There have been no changes in the school's context since the section 5 inspection.

Main findings

The headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have used the outcomes of the October inspection as an opportunity to re-focus and clarify the school's vision and its longer-term aim to become a 'nationally recognised centre of excellence' for

children with autistic spectrum disorders. A new and ambitious school improvement plan has been drafted in consultation with leaders and staff at all levels. The plan includes clear success criteria and suitable checks by which to measure progress. Broad timescales are also included which leaders plan to use to prioritise actions and identify when checks will be made to ensure that progress made is in line with medium- and long-term objectives.

As a first priority, decisive action has been taken by the headteacher to refresh and strengthen leadership roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders are currently involved in a bespoke development programme to increase the impact of their leadership on driving improvement. Other developments have provided a helpful baseline from which to measure future improvement. These include:

- establishing accurate data about pupils' current attainment from which to measure future progress
- the recent launch of a new rewards system to recognise good behaviour
- a review of the teaching of literacy across the school
- the outcomes of a staff survey on the school's culture.

In response to Ofsted's recommendations, an external review is planned of the governing body. Many governors are quite new to the role and keen to develop their expertise through the programme of induction and further training. The Chair of the Governing Body is also benefiting from the support of a mentor from a nearby outstanding special school. Governors are beginning to strengthen links with staff in order to raise their profile within school and learn more about its strengths and weaknesses.

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 recommends that further action is taken to:

- strengthen leadership at all levels so that all staff can contribute fully to the implementation of key priorities
- ensure consistency in routine classroom practice so that it always matches the best
- develop teachers' skills in the use of data to set targets and inform planning.

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

External support

A good range of support has been brokered by the local authority that is tailored to meet the school's needs. An external review by a National Leader of Governance has been commissioned and the local authority has also brokered the services of an experienced trainer to deliver the leadership development programme for senior leaders. The local authority Governors' Services have also been valuable in brokering

the support of a mentor for the newly appointed Chair. Local authority officers have pledged further support in future to evaluate the impact of training and support on securing improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morrissey
Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.