

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 566 937
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jsimmons@cfbt.com



14 June 2013

Mrs K Melling
Headteacher
Leyland Methodist Junior School
Canberra Road
Leyland
Lancashire
PR25 3ET

Dear Mrs Melling

Special measures monitoring inspection of Leyland Methodist Junior School

Following my visit on 12 and 13 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 2012. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Up to a maximum of two newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the diocese and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Improve achievement in English so that pupils of all abilities make at least expected progress by:
 - matching learning to pupils' different needs so they build sequentially on their prior learning
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use their writing and reading skills across the curriculum
 - widening the breadth of reading to include fiction and non-fiction texts that enable pupils to acquire skills of inference and deduction
 - using reading journals purposefully, ensuring they are regularly marked and show pupils what they do well and what they should improve.

- Raise attainment for more-able pupils so they reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by:
 - raising expectations and providing consistently challenging teaching based on accurate assessments of pupils' needs
 - ensuring tracking information is used to identify and address any underachievement
 - widening opportunities for learning in practical ways that extend pupils' thinking and investigative skills.

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that the majority is good or better and none is inadequate by:
 - ensuring assessment informs planning for learning so that pupils' work is relevant to their different needs and abilities
 - ensuring lessons challenge all pupils, especially the more-able pupils
 - marking pupils' work in a timely and regular manner so they understand what they do well and what they should improve
 - implementing learning targets that are shared with pupils, understood by them, and reviewed regularly
 - using time effectively so lessons begin promptly and move at a brisk pace to engage all pupils.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a leadership structure with clear roles for all leaders, but particularly middle and subject leaders, that focuses on tackling the most significant weaknesses
 - establishing regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and its impact on achievement over time, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils about their personal targets
 - convening regular meetings to review pupils' progress and acting on the information to arrest any underachievement
 - ensuring performance management holds teachers to account for pupils' progress
 - providing training in assessment and the teaching of reading and writing
 - ensuring that the governing body has first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - ensuring parents and carers are well-informed about teaching, learning and the curriculum.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 12 and 13 June 2013

Evidence

I observed eight different teachers in eight lessons. Three of these observations were completed alongside a senior leader. I met with two governors, two representatives of the local authority and with senior leaders. I also met with three leaders of subjects: science, physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT).

In this inspection I focused on two of the points for improvement: teaching, leadership and management.

Context

Since the previous inspection in February, two assistant headteachers have started at the school. Two teachers have taken leave due to long-term illness and they will continue to be absent until the end of their maternity leaves. A teacher, already on long-term absence is taking her maternity leave. At the time of this inspection one class was being taught temporarily by a supply teacher. A governor has resigned and a new governor has been appointed.

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved since my last visit. Most pupils are now making expected progress, however, there are still only a few making rapid progress. Pupils' achievement is still uneven and too dependent on which teacher they have in the classroom.

The focus this term has been on improving pupils' writing. Teachers have received training on how to plan and teach lessons that build up and extend pupils' skills and, for example, the structure of pupils' sentences. This training has been largely effective. In some classes, for example, pupils deepen their understanding of how to write for different audiences and purposes. In one example, pupils wrote compelling letters to the council to persuade it to tackle pollution to save lives. In another example, pupils applied their writing skills to write a weather forecast. However, in a few classes, teachers focus on different types of writing even though pupils have not fully understood how to construct sentences which means the activities do not meet pupils' needs and pupils do not make the progress they could.

In most classes, pupils' writing in other subjects has improved. However, in a few classes, the work in pupils' English books is far better than their work in 'topic' books. The next priority for the school is to increase pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics. In religious education, geography, history, science, design and technology, teachers should make sure pupils' written work reflects their standards of writing in English. There has rightly been a focus on improving standards in the core subjects of English and

mathematics. However, pupils' achievement in other subjects now needs to be improved. In some pupils' books, for example, there are still too many coloured in worksheets and too little writing and development of the skills for that subject. This is particularly the case in a Year 3 class; consequently, learning in that class has not improved and has deteriorated.

Pupils' reading continues to improve. In Years 3 and 4, pupils in three out of the four classes read regularly each week and have an improved understanding of the difference between fact and fiction books. In Years 5 and 6, pupils in their homework and in their reading journals completed complex comparisons of characters in books and identified figurative language such as metaphors and similes. Pupils in these classes are making better progress.

In mathematics, there has been a steady improvement in pupils' knowledge and skills but this is still too variable. In a few classes, pupils do not build their understanding sequentially which hinders their progress.

The quality of teaching

There has been an improvement in the quality of some teaching. In particular two of the three teachers, working with the recently appointed assistant headteachers, have improved their teaching. They gauge pupils' understanding better during the lessons, there is a quicker pace of learning and they use questions and teaching better to help pupils build on their skills and knowledge.

The proportion of outstanding teaching has increased. In one excellent lesson in mathematics, pupils deepened their understanding of measures and capacity and made rapid progress. They used reasoning, thinking and their knowledge of measures to mix juices in different proportions to make a one litre drink. In another excellent example, more-able pupils were challenged to apply their knowledge of habitats by considering scenarios such as what would happen if the squirrel population decreased significantly; and what would happen if green plants and trees died out; what would happen if owls moved to a new habitat in the desert?

There are still examples of inadequate teaching. These are typified by poorly chosen activities which do not extend pupils' thinking or which are not matched to the next stage in pupils' learning. Senior leaders are now acting to remove all inadequate teaching from the school.

Across the school there have been further improvements in marking. Most lessons start with pupils reviewing their learning, responding to teachers' feedback and completing corrections. This enables pupils to get a better understanding of what they need to work on in the lesson, and reinforces what was learnt in the previous lesson.

Training for teaching assistants has been successful which has resulted in better deployment during lessons and better quality questions to pupils. Assistants are more actively and positively involved in developing pupils' learning. In the best examples, assistants gauge pupils' understanding through good questions and use their understanding of progression to help pupils make gains in their learning. In one case, however, an assistant held back pupils' learning because of unhelpful advice.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils told me they felt behaviour was improving but would be even better if they had more things to do at lunch and break times. They said some of the problems occurred because pupils were bored and unoccupied.

In most classes behaviour has improved. Pupils are more motivated and enthusiastic; they concentrate more and respond well to all adults. However, in one Year 3 class pupils' behaviour has deteriorated significantly during the year and needs immediate action because poor behaviour is affecting pupils' progress. The school is aware of this and has redeployed a skilled teacher. While bullying incidents are low, during the inspection there was an incident of very poor behaviour with a pupil displaying signs of bullying and intimidation.

Pupils' attendance remains high and there have been no exclusions.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The main area of improvement has been to the leadership of the school. Since the appointment of two assistant headteachers, the headteacher has been able to give up the leadership of English and special educational needs to concentrate on school improvement. As a result, the capacity of the school to improve has at last begun to move from being inadequate. The new team has already had an impact on the quality of teaching. It has a more accurate view of how to measure the quality of teaching in a lesson on its impact on pupils' progress.

In addition, there have been improvements to the quality of subject leadership. Most subjects now have an action plan to improve because subject leaders have analysed standards in their subjects and have made an initial view on the quality of teaching. The next stage is for subject leaders to demonstrate how they can take action to improve an aspect of their subject.

School improvement plans are now out of date. By September, the school needs to develop new improvement plans that focus on teaching, learning and leadership in subjects other than English and mathematics. There is a need, for example, to improve the monitoring of lessons and pupils' work in history and geography to make sure there is a focus on the quality of pupils' learning rather than on whether teachers are complying with school policies. Most gaps in the achievement between different groups of pupils are closing. The school's tracking systems, discussions with teachers and governors look at the performance of pupils as a class, year group and individually. This now needs to be extended to monitor groups of pupils such as, for example, boys' standards compared with girls, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compared to those who are not.

External support

The support for the school has continued to have a positive impact. Advisers have worked alongside the newly appointed assistant headteachers to verify their judgements of teaching and also to measure the impact they have had on improving teachers' practice.

The local authority personnel department has continued to provide useful advice and support given the continued disruption to staffing.

As senior leaders are now showing an ability to take actions to improve the school themselves there has been a shift in the local authority's role from one of intervening to one of supporting and challenging.