

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 566 857
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jkinsman@cfbt.com



25 June 2013

Mr Mike Porter
Headteacher
Darton Primary School
Station Road
Darton
Barnsley South
South Yorkshire
S75 5AD

Dear Mr Porter

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Darton Primary School, Barnsley

Following my visit with Amraz Ali Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 24 June 2013, 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 April 2013. 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, the Chair of the Governing Body, representatives of the local authority and the Executive Principal of St Mary's Academy Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan and other documents, including a sample of pupils' work were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a tour of the school.

Context

The headteacher is retiring at the end of the summer term 2013 and the seconded deputy headteacher will leave the school at the same time.

In September 2013 the substantive deputy headteacher will return from maternity leave on a part time basis. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed on a temporary contract from within the school.

There is a temporary arrangement in place to lead the school following the headteacher's retirement involving the Executive Principal from St Mary's Academy Trust and the headteacher and the deputy headteacher from St Mary's Academy.

There will be two new teachers in September 2013.

There are plans for the school to become an academy as part of St Mary's Academy Trust.

Main findings

The local authority has provided strong support to the headteacher in the development of an improvement plan focussed on the inspection findings. There are a range of actions to take place before the end of the Summer term 2013. Early actions include work to eliminate the teaching that requires improvement through observations in a local primary school linked to individual action plans for teachers who are not yet good. However the impact of this is limited and has not yet brought about rapid improvement in all areas of teaching and learning.

Work has begun to improve the provision for the joint Reception and Year 1 class, both by developing the learning environment, and by sharing good practice in planning for teaching and learning with Foundation Unit colleagues.

With the support of the local authority, assessment is being improved and moderation means that teachers are assessing work more consistently. This has had a positive impact on the assessment of writing. Teachers are not yet using progress data effectively to inform their planning for pupils of different abilities.

Subject leaders are beginning to take responsibility for attainment and progress and in holding other teachers to account. Although some leadership training has taken place it has not yet brought about improvements in teaching and progress over time.

Senior leaders, governors, the local authority and St Mary's Academy Trust are working together in the school improvement strategy group. This group will play a key role in monitoring the progress of the improvement plan and the achievement of pupil groups. All of the actions undertaken to improve the school so far are at an early stage. As a result the impact is limited.

In September 2013 there will be new temporary leadership arrangements involving a number of leaders from St Mary's Academy Trust. Leaders, governors and the local authority recognise that the success of this arrangement depends on good communication between the leaders. It is essential that all involved in leading the school use their skills to ensure that rapid improvements take place.

With the strong challenge and support of the local authority senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- secure a smooth transition to the new leadership arrangements to ensure rapid improvement
- ensure communication between all those responsible for leadership from September 2013 is clear and focussed on the areas for improvement
- use planned developments to bring about rapid and demonstrable improvements to teaching
- make sure subject leaders are trained to be accountable for attainment and progress in their area.

External support

The local authority has provided effective challenge and support in developing the improvement plan and through the school improvement strategy group. They have brokered the support of the Executive Principal from St Mary's Academy Trust who has begun to establish a detailed picture of teaching and learning and the priorities for September.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

Her Majesty's Inspector