

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

27 June 2013

Mrs Lorraine White
Interim Headteacher
Cottingley Primary Academy
Dulverton Grove
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS11 0HU

Dear Mrs White

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Cottingley Primary Academy

Following my visit with Anne Bowyer, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 25 and 26 June 2013, 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 a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the academy improvement officer, the behaviour and attendance manager and a group of older pupils.

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

The academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

Context

Cottingley Primary Academy opened in December 2012 in the same building as the predecessor school. The academy's sponsor is Academies Enterprise Trust.

There are currently 296 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11 years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium is well above average. An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average.

Since the academy opened, a deputy headteacher and a business manager have left the academy. An interim headteacher and business manager have been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

Children join the academy with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Effective teaching across the Early Years Foundation Stage is ensuring that children are able to make a secure start and they make good progress. Significant improvements in achievement are also evident for younger pupils in Key Stage 1. However, current test results for Year 2 pupils do not yet reflect this improving picture. Academy leaders recognise that greater consistency in provision is needed to enable all pupils to meet the academy's challenging targets, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1.

In Key Stage 2, achievement data indicates that, overall, pupils are on track to make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with accelerated progress evident for younger pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in Year 6 have made much better progress in English and mathematics than was the case in the predecessor school. As a result, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is likely to be closer to national expectations in 2013, albeit still below the government's floor standards.

Robust action, including targeted intervention, taken by academy leaders has started to successfully tackle the legacy of underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly of those pupils supported through the pupil premium and those with additional language and learning needs. Leaders are able to demonstrate that, overall, the gaps in performance between the academy's pupils and pupils nationally are starting to close.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching across the academy is regularly monitored by senior leaders. Arrangements include formal lesson observations and frequent unannounced 'drop – in' observations; this work is further supported by the regular scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' workbooks. Detailed lesson feedback, valued by teachers, and

well-targeted professional development, including sharing best practice, are resulting in better consistency and improvements in classroom practice.

Inspectors observed a sample of lessons in all key stages. In the majority of lessons, the quality of teaching was at least good. Key aspects included: high expectations; activities well-matched to pupils' ability levels; targeted questions to assess pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking; and the promotion of paired and group discussion to extend pupils' learning. Pupils enjoyed these lessons and accelerated progress was evident. However, pupils made slower gains in their learning in those lessons where activities were less demanding or too similar for all pupils and where there was an overemphasis on support and consolidation, rather than challenge. Leaders recognise that provision in Key Stage 1, overall, requires further improvement to ensure that teaching has a greater impact on pupils' achievement.

Marking of pupils' workbooks is regular with many examples of helpful, constructive comments, particularly in literacy and numeracy books. Pupils have the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments and gain a better understanding of how to improve. Older pupils understand and value the academy's focus on improving their handwriting and presentation. The quality of marking, however, for subjects other than literacy and numeracy is less consistent across the academy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Positive relationships between adults and pupils are evident across the academy. Pupils behave well in lessons, at social times and when moving around the academy site. In lessons, they are keen to do well and work willingly with their peers on activities and in discussion. They understand the academy's behaviour 'step' system and report that they enjoy attending the academy and feel safe and well cared for.

The academy has taken a rigorous approach to improving safeguarding provision for pupils, particularly child-protection procedures. Comprehensive pastoral arrangements are also now in place to ensure that those pupils with the highest level of personal and social need receive prompt support and care, when required. This work, together with a review of the use of sanctions within the academy's behaviour-management procedures, has effectively reduced the number of behaviour incidents across the academy.

The academy has worked hard to improve attendance, with a focus on those pupils with a track record of poor attendance. As a result the attendance of these pupils, overall, has improved. The academy's attendance is currently in line with the national average.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The interim headteacher has provided the academy with clear strategic leadership and very skilfully introduced significant changes in all aspects of the academy's work.

She has high expectations of all academy personnel and has ensured that all fully understand their responsibilities and their role in the academy's improvement agenda. This approach has energised staff, who have responded well and are playing a full part in the academy's drive for improvement.

Senior leaders, collectively, have a sharper focus on the academy's key priorities. They feel empowered, but fully accountable. They now take full responsibility for literacy, numeracy and phase leadership and report regularly to the interim headteacher. Weekly meetings with their phase teams ensure that they are able to closely track pupils' achievement and they are also directly responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and the pastoral provision within their areas of responsibility. As a result leaders have an accurate view of the academy's performance and are able to act swiftly, where intervention is needed. The academy recognises, however, that there is now scope to develop the leadership skills of those staff who have responsibility for subjects other than literacy and numeracy.

Currently, governance of the academy lies with a management board. The board has met once to review key aspects of the academy's work. It is the intention of the academy to move to a full governing body at the earliest opportunity, with a number of new governors already appointed. The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

External support

The academy's sponsor worked effectively to swiftly secure leadership at the academy with the appointment of the interim headteacher. Regular monitoring and support from the academy improvement officer, together with the use of electronic reporting systems, ensure that the academy's progress is kept under review.

Senior leaders have also commissioned external consultants to support teachers and leaders in a range of curriculum areas. Support from the sponsor and external consultants has included training on safeguarding issues and information and communication technology, and development work in literacy, numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Priorities for further improvement

- In order to improve achievement further, particularly in Key Stage 1, ensure that the quality of teaching in all lessons is at least good and increase the opportunity for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
- Develop the skills of all subject leaders so that they are able to play a full part in monitoring teaching and pupils' achievement in their area of responsibility.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Management Board and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector