

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

T 0300 123 1231
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



18 September 2013

Mrs Cathy Lord
The Headteacher
Victoria Road Primary School
Victoria Road
Northwich
Cheshire
CW9 5RE

Dear Mrs Lord

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Victoria Road Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 September, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report my findings. 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 May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- tighten up the action plan to make sure the staff responsible report to governors every half term on the improvements to pupils' progress.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you, other school leaders, pupils, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school development plans. I looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' attainment and progress, an evaluation report on recent test results and the evaluation of the impact of the breakfast club on improving school attendance. I attended your

welcome meeting with parents of children in the reception class. I also met pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 to talk about recent changes in the school and look at examples of their work.

Context

You were recently appointed as headteacher of Victoria Road Primary School and started at the school in September 2013. Your deputy was acting headteacher during the last inspection and you are working effectively together to move the school forward.

Main findings

You, the governors and staff are determined to ensure the school is good. The development plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection. However, parts of it should be more precise about when and how the impact of activities will be evaluated to ensure progress for pupils is maintained.

Improving the attendance of pupils has been a priority for the school and the swift actions taken are having a positive effect. Parents have a greater awareness of the link between attendance and their child's progress. You have been keen to continue the positive relationship that the school has with parents and this was demonstrated in your meeting with the parents of the reception class.

You see the need to strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching and focus on challenging all pupils to work more independently to take responsibility for their own learning and progress. Staff have more positive attitudes towards supporting each other and sharing expertise both within and beyond the school. Opportunities for sharing good practice are a focus in staff meetings. The lesson observations carried out since the last inspection show an improvement in the quality of teaching. However, the impact of this improvement is yet to be reflected in the attainment levels of the pupils which are still too low. Improving individual pupil's progress and early intervention remains a focus for the school. In order to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress staff training has taken place on improving questioning and sharing the knowledge to help transition from one class to the next. You have introduced better processes to measure the impact of extra support for pupils, for example the breakfast club: you now know that attendance has improved for most children attending the club.

The pupils told me that there had been an increased focus on reading targets and they liked the new incentives for 100% attendance. They said they would like more physical activities and do more things for charities. They thought that their concentration would improve if they had doors on all the classrooms. Marking of their books told pupils what was good and what needed improving.

Staff said the professional development they have received has been useful and they are determined to improve the quality of teaching. Sharing good teaching practice through joint observations and coaching is generally welcomed by staff and they are keen to develop this openness through structured visits to other schools. Some restructuring has taken place in senior and middle leadership roles and staff say they feel more empowered to make improvements in the school.

The challenge and support governors offer has improved and this has had an impact on improving attendance. Governors are determined to raise their profile and use the school website. Training has improved their understanding of data and the rigour with which they can challenge current levels of attainment and progress.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has assigned a number of different people to support the school over the past two years; however your current supporter is determined to offer continuity and is keen to help you develop further links with similar local schools to share good practice. This support for the school is in its early stage and needs to be incisive and effective to help develop the consistency of good quality teaching and raise the levels of attainment of the pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Christina McIntosh

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- The lead inspector.